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THE BIG GAMES FOR 2004

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 76 (January 2004)

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ADDEN NFL 2005 · LIFELINE · MONSTER HUNTER · ONIMUSHA
ESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK · DRIVER 3 · JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING O
OTHING · NFL STREET · CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUES
PLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW · SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAI
MEN: LEGENDS · KINGDOM HEARTS 2 · FINAL FANTASY XI · SPIDER-MAN
AFIA · DRAKENGARD · MLB SLUGFEST PRO · SONIC HEROES · STAR
RAFT: GHOST · STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT · THE LORD OF TH
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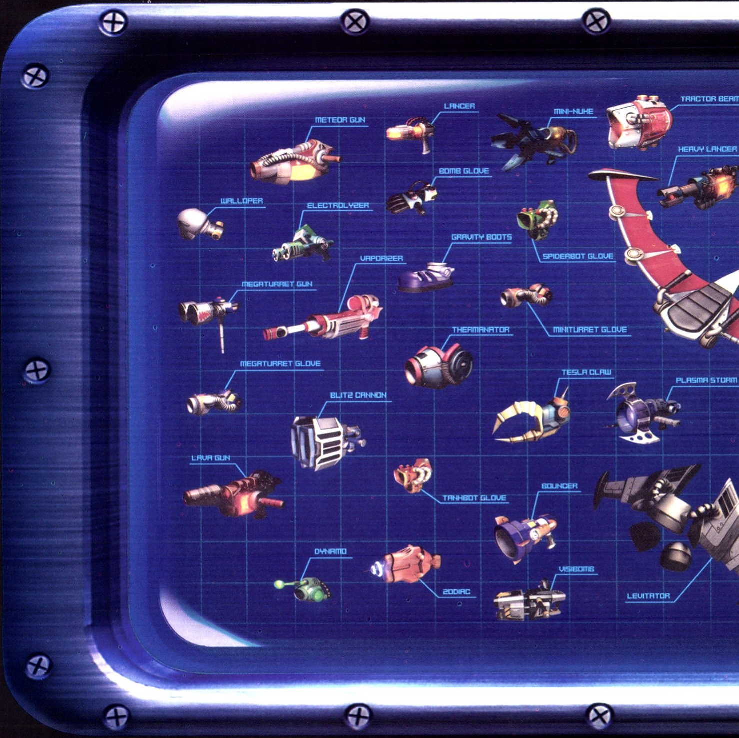
METEOR GUN
LANCER
MINI-NUKE
TRACTOR BEAM
HEAVY LANCER
BOMB GLOVE
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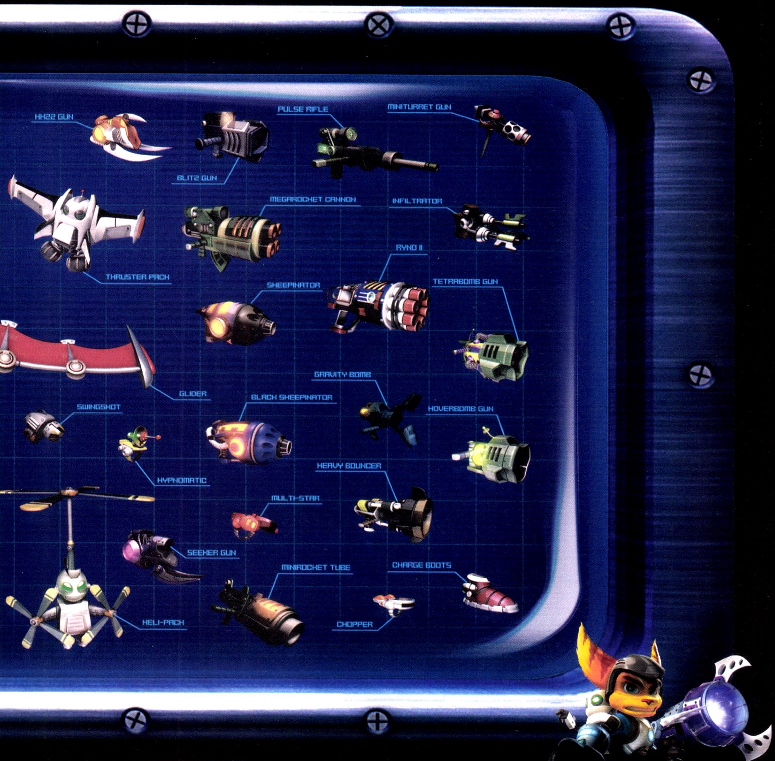
EENIE, MEENIE, MINEY, BOOM.

They're back. And they're itching for action. With tons of planets to conquer in a whole new gigantic galaxy, you better believe Ratchet & Clank are gonna sink their teeth into some destruction. Ummm, destruction. With weapon upgrades, mods, armor and the ability for Ratchet to get stronger and smarter as the game goes on, this could get uglier than The Grandmas In Bikinis Calendar after-party. Speaking of parties, there's also hoverbike racing, space combat and gladiator arenas. As far as weapons and gadgets go, Ratchet & Clank are stacked with over 50 new ones, along with unlockable upgrades, so by the end of the journey, you'll go through more weapons and gadgets than a hungry fat man will go through chicken wings at lunch. Lock and load, baby, lock and load. **www.us.playstation.com**


HK22 GUN
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MINITURRET GUN
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INFILTRATOR
THRUSTER PACK
RYNO II
SHEEPINATOR
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BLACK SHEEPINATOR
SWINGSHOT
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RATCHET & CLANK

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TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Violence

PlayStation 2

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–IGN

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Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

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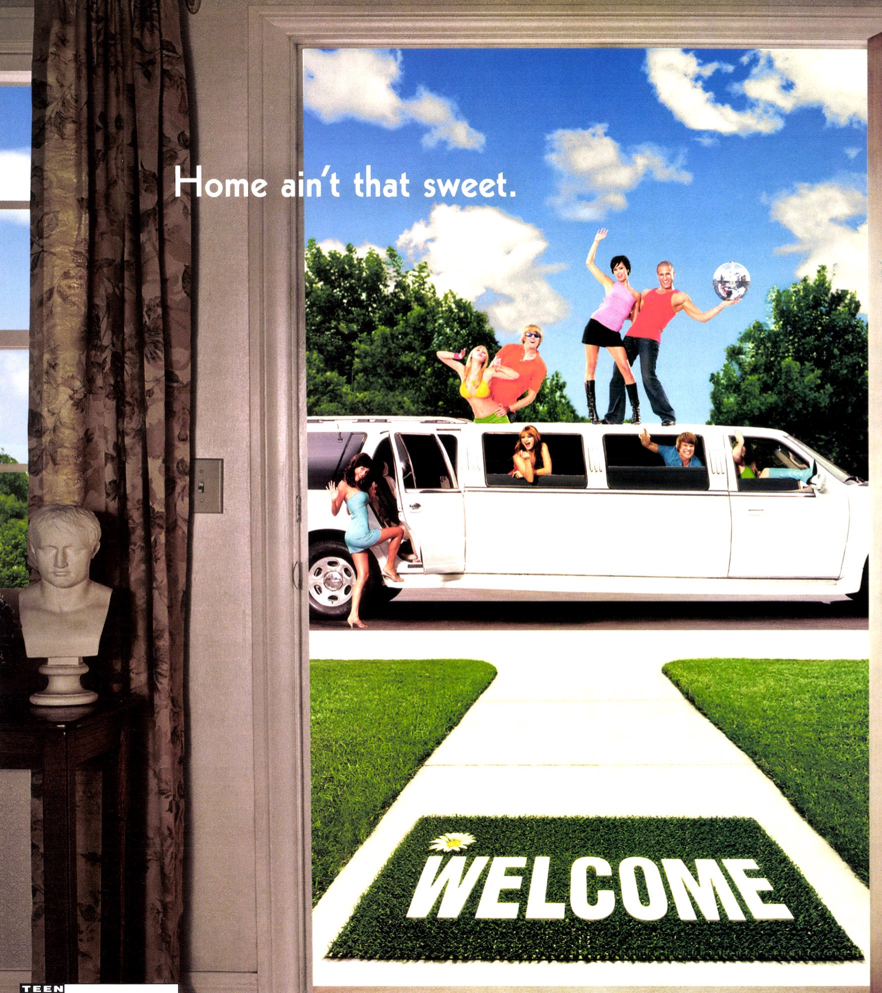

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Crude Humor
Mature Sexual Themes
Mild Violence

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY required. Online game play available for the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system only. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately).

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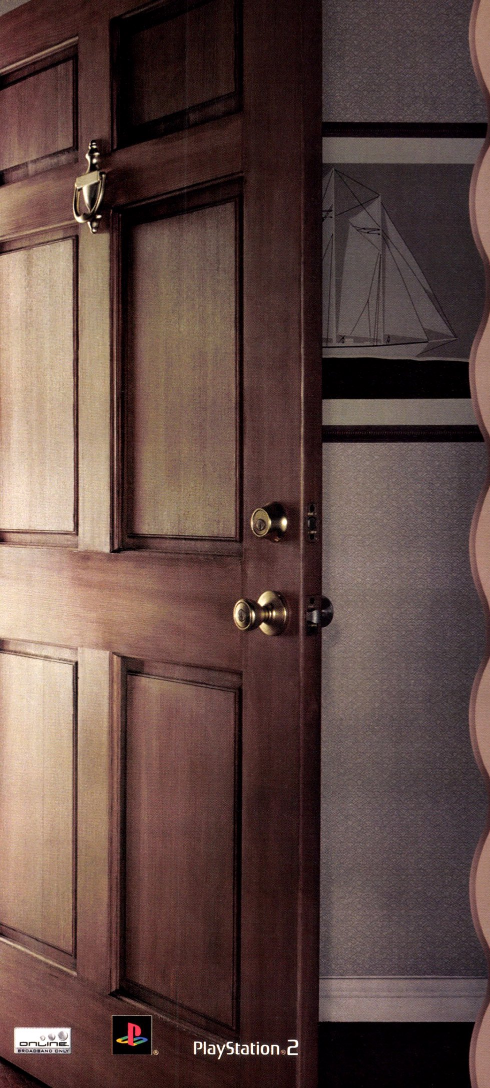
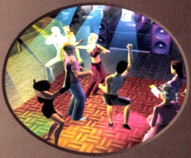


So, where to?



Mona Lott is a dancer at Club Rubb. She digs her man Bing, but, that doesn't mean she won't have some lovin' to spare.

Fran Foofarow lets it all hang out at Pixel Acres. Play your cards right and you'll be seeing more of her. A lot more.

Goldie Toane - flex for her at the gym, and she'll coo over your buff body and maybe tell you a few dirty jokes if you're lucky.

Randy Hart's a regular at Casa Caliente where he loves to give bear hugs on the bear rug. A word to the wise - don't pull his finger.

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Game Experience may change during online play

In my quest
for redemption
Not even my
death

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Violence
Suggestive Themes

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

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PlayStation 2

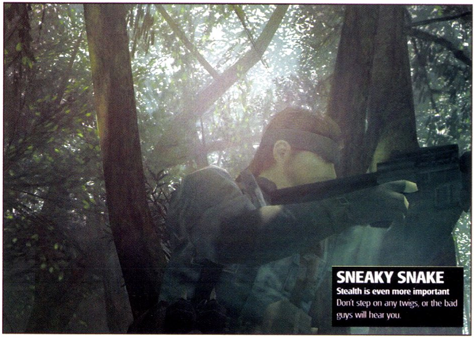
GAME BOY ADVANCE

METAL GEAR SOLID 3

This time it's complicated

This is absolutely the last *Metal Gear* Hideo Kojima is working on. He may have said that about *MGS2*, but he was kidding. This time he *really* means it. Just to be sure, he's making the whole concept as complicated as humanly possible so that we're all left scratching our heads. Some knowledge of the franchise is required to really understand the overall concept, but the bare bones of it is that *Snake Eater* takes place back in the '60s, long before the events of previous games. We're assuming you learn a little more about Snake's origin and his place in the story arc's broader, more sinister plot. Intrigue aside, you get to shoot at a lot of stuff and sneak around in the jungle. How cool is that?

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** November

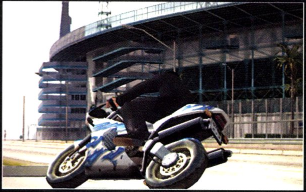


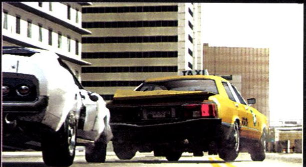
SNEAKY SNAKE
Stealth is even more important
Don't step on any twigs, or the bad guys will hear you.

DRIVER 3

The wheelman is back (again) in the latest installment of the *Driver* series. This time, Tanner goes undercover in Nice, Miami, and Istanbul to bust a stolen-car ring. The amount of environmental detail in the game is especially impressive, thanks to 35,000 different types of buildings and an array of cool lighting and special effects. But perhaps the game's coolest aspect is a physics engine that takes into account almost every single object in the game, whether it's the hood of a car or a tire rolling down the street. A director's mode is also included for budding filmmakers.

Publisher: Atari **Developer:** Reflections **Release Date:** March

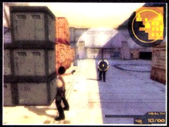


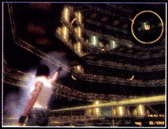


HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

We're told that Jack Wade is once again the lead character for the sequel to *Headhunter* and that the girl you see in these screens, Leeza X, is merely his "reluctant new sidekick." We'll believe it when we see it. Ever since it was revealed at E3 last May, *Redemption* has been all Ms. X, all the time. Show yourself, Jack! We want to see you 20 years after the last game, all battle hardened as the Bloody Mary Virus has divided society into two distinct areas. We also want to actually control you to a decent degree this time!

Pub.: Sega **Dev.:** Amuze **Date:** Spring





MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN 2

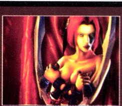
Chances are, *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun 2* isn't what the final game will be called, but it is the other half of *Rising Sun*—the half needed to make it a complete game—that wasn't included with this year's release. The story picks up with Donny Griffin (you know...the "other brother") and presumably involves more running around in the jungle with really old guns. No doubt the presentation will be even more spectacular than ever before—let's just hope the enemy A.I. improves a bit.

Pub.: EA Games **Dev.:** EALA **Date:** Nov.

Sadly, G.I. Wilbur never achieved the fame of his brother Joe.

BLOODRAYNE 2

The sequel to Majesco's best PS2 game (OK...its *only good* PS2 game) places the half-vampiric antiheroine in another guns-a-blazin' adventure set in the World War II era. Although we're pretty sure Nazis once again provide the opposition, Rayne's most capable nemesis this go-round is her pack of evil siblings.



TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3

Xbox owners are already going absolutely weak at the knees over this one, thanks to its tactical squad-based gameplay and incredible visuals powered by the *Splinter Cell* engine. It plays similarly to the *Rainbow Six* PS1 games: As part of Clancy's fantasy antiterrorist squad, you must work as a team to defeat drug dealers and other ne'er-do-wells while saving the world.

FIRST STRIKE CANNED!

Namco's SWAT-like game set in *Dead to Rights*' Grant City, *First Strike*, has been canceled. Boo frickin' hoo.

55 Number of movies Jean Reno has been credited with since 1979's *The Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting*.

DEAD TO RIGHTS II: HELL TO PAY

Perhaps taking a cue from *Rise to Honor*, the sequel to the fairly mediocre *Dead to Rights* features a new 360-degree combat system that allows action-noir hero Jack Slate (and let's not forget his trusty canine sidekick, Shadow!) to easily attack enemies in all directions. He can also adjust his position in the middle of his trademark slow-mo dives, making them more useful. Plus, expect a bunch of new hand-to-hand weapons and more interactive environments. Let's hope this all means the game will be *better* than the original—not just bigger.

Pub.: Namco **Dev.:** Namco **Date:** Fall

NINA

The *Tekken* series' resident amnesiac gets her own beat-em-up, appropriately called *Nina*. The female assassin comes equipped with an assortment of punch-and-kick combinations that you can execute by pressing the right analog stick. Nina also uses swords and guns to take out enemies, but her most devastating attack, internal destruction, transitions into a brief X-ray scene showing an enemy's rib cage spontaneously collapsing. Ouch!

Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco **Date:** TBA

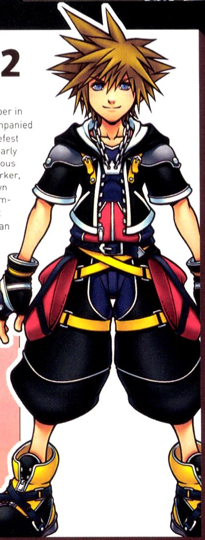
KINGDOM HEARTS 2

Mickey gets armed

Remember that moment when you first saw Yoda unholster his lightsaber in *Episode II*? For *Kingdom Hearts* fans, a similar rush of excitement accompanied the first sighting of a keyblade-wielding Mickey, who made only the briefest appearance in the previous game. Also thrilling: a scene in that same early preview trailer in which one character is swinging two keyblades in furious fashion. With a slightly older cast, *Kingdom Hearts II* looks to bring a darker, edgier vibe to this fantastic Disney/Square crossover. Not much is known about the game's new lineup of Disney worlds, but we're hoping the camera gets an overhaul, so we can better enjoy them. Either way, we can't wait to reunite the dream team of Sora, Goofy, and Donald so that we can kick some Disney ass.

Publisher: Square Enix **Developer:** Square Enix **Release Date:** Late '04 (or later)

Is Sora getting a better weapon this time? Nope!



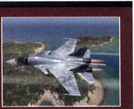
ONIMUSHA 3

Like its predecessor, *Onimusha 3* utilizes an actual actor to portray one of the playable characters. In this case, Jean Reno plays the role of a present-day French cop named Jacque who abruptly switches time periods with Samanosuke, the hero from *Onimusha: Warlords*. Jacque wields a gun and a whip that lets him wrap up enemies and swing across large gaps. He also acquires the power to consume souls with a special gauntlet. Meanwhile, good ol' Sammy relies on his trusty sword to do his dirty business. Also of note, *Onimusha 3* features fully polygonal environments instead of prerendered backdrops for the first time in the series, and while they might not be as detailed, they're much livelier.

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** Spring

AIRFORCE DELTA STRIKE

The *AirForce Delta* series makes its PS2 debut in grand fashion—you've got access to more than 100 planes (both as real as an F-14 Tomcat or as fictional as the *Vic Viper* from *Gradius*) to fly in 60 missions spanning the globe and even venturing into outer space. As you may have gathered, this is no flight sim.

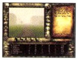


MAXIMO VS. ARMY OF ZIN

You've heard us say it for months, but we really like the focus on heroism that Capcom is implementing with the new *Maximo*. Check out our review next month.

OLDER SCHOOL

Devil Whiskey is a "turn-based, grid-mapped, 3D role-playing adventure" that pays homage to classic RPGs like *The Bard's Tale*.



STARCRAFT: GHOST

Like Metal Gear in space

Fans of the real-time strategy *StarCraft* series on PC and Mac are frothing because of *Ghost*. Why? First, it's an extension of one of the most popular games in the world (people in Korea have been known to play it so much that they forget to eat and then die). Second, it's a console game—not a PC release. Those computer gamers take things very seriously, you know. In essence, you could describe *Ghost* as a bit like *Metal Gear* or *Splinter Cell* set in the distant future. You play as Nova, a psychic commando who can turn invisible at will as she infiltrates enemy bases and shoots evil aliens. We've seen the game a number of times, and it looks great. We especially like the fact that it features an awful lot of extremely large explosions.

Publisher: Blizzard **Developer:** Nihilistic **Release Date:** Eventually

THE BARD'S TALE

We know all you old-school PC gamers just did a double take. Yes, *The Bard's Tale*, one of the first videogame RPGs, is preparing a triumphant return. A modified version of the *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* engine will fuel this action-RPG driven by a smart, funny story that will avoid—if not outright mock—RPG clichés. Furthermore, expect a genuinely nonlinear story line with real choices, not just conversation options that all end up in the same place. An RPG in which you actually *play* a *role*? Shocking!

Publisher: InXile **Developer:** InXile **Release Date:** Fall

"I'm a bard. I sing songs. Got a problem with that?"

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

We're not clear on the details, but Vivendi Universal and Interplay have had a lovers' spat. Now, Interplay is publishing *Dark Alliance II*, the long-awaited sequel to the awesome *Baldur's Gate* console debut of 2001. Just like the original, the game features a healthy dose of *D&D: Forgotten Realms*–based role-playing, with an even healthier dose of nonstop hack-n-slash action. This time, choose from five distinctive playable characters to venture through 80 levels. Interplay remains tight-lipped regarding any story details, but we do know it's told in four acts and it builds off the previous game's cliffhanger ending. And multiple story paths means a lot of extra replay value.

P: VUG **D:** Black Isle **Date:** January

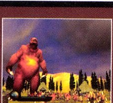
LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE

The lovable loser is back... kinda. In this installment (the first since '98), you actually play as Larry Lovage, the nephew of Larry Laffer. The previous *Larry* games were about Mr. Laffer's pathetic (and comedic) search for love; here, his nephew goes through the same kind of quest, but on a college campus. Gameplay is a mystery, but we know for sure it's *not* point and click. We're bummed creator Al Lowe isn't involved, but we still have hopes for this one.

P: VUG **D:** High Voltage **Date:** Fall

BLACK & WHITE: NEXT GENERATION

It's still publisher free, but you have to assume someone will pick up the first PS2 version of Lionhead Studios' much-ballyhooed god simulator. Which animal avatar will you choose? Will you be giving or vengeful?



FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

On PC, Interplay's *Fallout* series plays much like its *Baldur's Gate* computer games. On PS2, the same analogy is true, only between *Brotherhood of Steel* and *Dark Alliance*. Except you do a lot of shooting in *Steel*—lots and lots of it. The postapocalyptic setting also adds a certain...charm.

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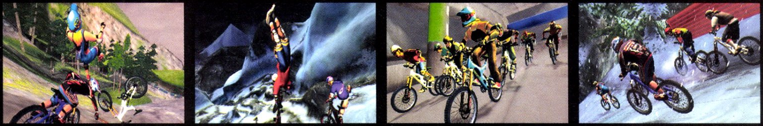

Sack up, gentlemen. The first downhill mountain bike racing game for PlayStation 2 is here. Introducing Downhill Domination,™ where to get to the top you have to get to the bottom first. That means bombing down wickedly steep mountains. Busting tricks off 100-foot cliffs. And brawling your way past opponents with a combat system that lets you punch, kick and even hurl water bottles. The prize? The latest high-tech bike parts and sponsorships from real-world manufacturers. And the most admired *cojones* on the mountain. **www.us.playstation.com**

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ESRB
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Violence

PlayStation 2

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85 Percentage of Nevada owned by the federal government. This includes Area 51, which lies near a small town called Rachel.

GRADIUS V

As a 2D shooter, *Gradius V* isn't going to do much for the modern gamer, but few other games of recent memory have what it takes to excite the oldest school of old schoolers more. The series has existed for nearly two decades, but never before has a *Gradius* featured such awe-inspiring graphics—this game basically does for *Gradius* what *Contra: Shattered Soldier* did for *that* classic Konami franchise. If you're not familiar with the series, just envision a side-scrolling shoot-em-up with crap blowing up *everywhere*. We're betting it's frickin' hard, too. Old school, indeed.

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Treasure **Release Date:** February

MEGA MAN ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

Capcom celebrates 15 years of the Blue Bomber with a Mega Maniac's dream—*Mega Man Anniversary Collection* features every core *Mega Man* title, from the 1987 NES original to *Mega Man 8* on PS1 and Saturn. And that's not all. *Collection* also includes two arcade games formerly exclusive to Japan (*Mega Man Power Battle* and *Mega Man 2: The Power Fighters*), plus artwork, interviews, commercials (!), and other cool extras.

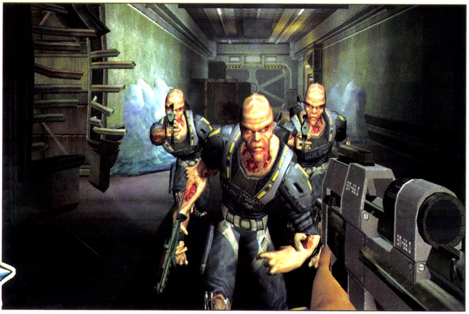
Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom
Release Date: February

AREA 51

No lightgun necessary

In an interesting move, Midway is turning one of its leading light-gun arcade shooters into a first-person shooter. With aliens designed by the famous Stan Winston (*Alien*, *Predator*), the game is said to feature not only your standard first-person-shooter action, but also exploration, adventure, and puzzle solving. Also cool: Your character, Lt. Nick Cross, has been infected by an alien virus. Over time, the virus causes Cross to develop new powers—but at the cost of his humanity!

Publisher: Midway **Developer:** Midway **Release Date:** October



NARC

NARC resurrects one of the most popular and notorious arcade games of the late '80s. As two members of an elite squad of drug busters, you travel around the world to bust dealers from the organization known as K.R.A.K., using either your fists or an enormous arsenal of weapons, including flamethrowers, assault rifles, and rocket launchers.

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Vis
Release Date: September

MEGA MAN X: COMMAND MISSION

Although not the first time Mega Man has deviated from his roots, *Command Mission* is the first true RPG adaptation of the long-running series. Each character in your three-member party has access to unique attacks while engaged in battle.

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom **Release Date:** TBA

R-TYPE FINAL

If you really dig the shmups ("shoot-em-ups" for the nonhardcore fans out there), you can't ignore *R-Type Final*. Besides looking incredible, this latest installment to the *R-Type* series comes packed with 102 ships, the most ever. You can't go wrong with that.

Publisher: Fresh Games
Developer: Irem **Date:** January

METAL SLUG 3

The PS2 version of this 2D shooter features two exclusive bonus missions. One takes place inside a UFO, while the other is a weight-gaining challenge. (Don't ask.)

PITFALL HARRY

In the spirit of the Atari 2600 game that put Activision on the map, *Pitfall Harry* offers a decidedly 21st-century version of archaeological platforming.

SONIC HEROES

Finally, Sonic is on PS2. And if you've already read our story on page 40, you know why he and his pals are so very, very welcome.

ALTERED BEAST

The fact that *Altered Beast* wasn't at the Tokyo Game Show leads us to believe it might be canceled. But hey, it lets you turn into animals with rabies. Who wouldn't want that?

BAPTIZED IN
BLOOD,
A FAMILY'S
TRAGIC
DESTINY
IS BORN.

At the dawn of the second millennium, the first Belmont makes the ultimate sacrifice. And the destiny of a bloodline is decided. From the creators of Castlevania® Symphony of the Night™ and completely reinvented for its 3D debut on PlayStation®2, Castlevania® Lament of Innocence™ reveals the true origins of the vampire-hunting Belmonts and their tireless quest for Vlad Dracula. A thousand years ago, a legend was indeed born. And the dying hasn't stopped since.

"5 out of 5" - *GamePro*

"9 out of 10" - *PSM*

"9 out of 10" - *IGN.com*

Castlevania®
lament of innocence™

MATURE 17+
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82+ Number of possible games coming out in 2004 reported by Clish in this entire feature.

CLISH MACLAVER'S GOSSIP GOSSIP

Returning franchise rumors

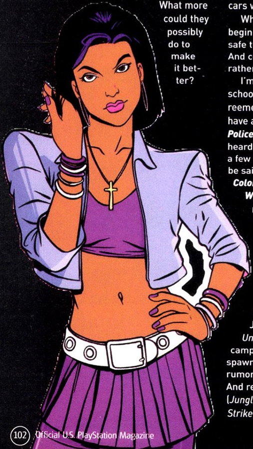
There are many sequels coming in 2004, and the list of rumored games nearly equals the number of confirmed titles.

The biggest story is, of course, that Rockstar is working on a new ***Grand Theft Auto***. Absolutely no one will say anything about it, but it was confirmed (and curiously dubbed ***GTA5***) during a Take-Two financial-earnings statement in October. There's no word on whether it's a period piece as previously suggested, but the subtitle *Sin City* no longer looks likely. Shame—I kinda liked the '70s Vegas idea that was being kicked around for a while.

Christian Slater is starring in the upcoming ***Alone in the Dark*** movie. Expect his involvement in a new game from Atari.

After enjoying a successful 2003 holiday season, Ubisoft looks set to provide sequels for all the games you'd expect. It's safe to assume another ***Prince of Persia*** is in the works, as well as sequels to ***XIII*** (*XIII-2*? *XIV*? What will they call it?) and the beautiful ***Beyond Good & Evil***.

There are rumors of lots of games with the number "3" in the title next year, including ***Devil May Cry 3***, ***Ratchet & Clank 3***, ***Jak III***, ***NBA Street Vol. 3***, ***Pac-Man World 3***, ***SpyHunter 3***, ***Midnight Club 3***, and the one I'm personally looking forward to the most, ***Hitman 3***. All represent franchises truly hitting their stride, and all are games we can expect great things from. Oh, I almost forgot...there's talk of a third ***SOCOM*** in the works, too. What more could they possibly do to make it better?



Military operations should be present as well in Konami's new, possibly 3D ***Contra*** and another ***Deus Ex***, courtesy of Eidos. I suppose you could even throw Jaleco's ***Goblin Commander 2*** and Koei's ***Naval Ops 2*** into the same category—if you care enough to.

You can hog-tie me, cover me in peanut butter, and call me Barry if Activision doesn't release the inevitable ***Tony Hawk's Underground*** sequel in '04. I also think it looks extremely likely that Nick Kang will return in a ***True Crime*** sequel—possibly subtitled with a different city. Let's hope it sucks slightly less.

At Acclaim, BMX-pert Dave Mirra has returned to endorse any booby-free *BMX* games the company releases. It looks like ***Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 3*** should arrive by the end of the year.

Absolutely no one will say anything about [a new *Grand Theft Auto*], but it was confirmed (and curiously dubbed *GTA5*).

R: Racing Evolution is not a *Ridge Racer* game, got it? ***Ridge Racer VI*** will likely appear in the summer and will return to its arcade-style roots with a superslidey driving model and brightly colored, shiny cars with Pac-Man pictures all over them.

While we're talking about games beginning with the letter "R," I think it's safe to expect ***Rygar 2*** by the summer. And come to think of it, Tecmo has acted rather "deceptive" lately....

I'm expecting to see a bunch of old-school Psygnosis PS1 franchises reemerge, and I've heard all of them will have a ton of online content. I expected ***G-Police*** to have been announced already (I'd heard it was going to be at ECTS in London a few months ago...not so). The same can be said for overhauled interpretations of ***Colony Wars***, ***Destruction Derby***, and ***WipeOut***, all produced by completely new teams at Sony Europe.

Electronic Arts will have as big a year as ever next year, with rumors already circulating that new ***Need for Speed*** and ***SSX*** games are in development. I'd be surprised if the latter saw a 2004 release—but I'll eat my car if we don't see a *Need for Speed*.

Just don't bet on it being a sequel to *Underground*. Elsewhere in the EA camp, ***The Sims*** will no doubt continue to spawn sequels, and there are even rumors of ***Road Rash*** being resurrected. And remember EA's old ***Strike*** games (*Jungle Strike*, *Desert Strike*, and *Urban Strike*)? Well, last I heard, another is on tap...only it won't have "Strike" in its name, nor will it be published by EA.

What ever happened to all those rumors of a ***Sly Cooper*** sequel? I loved that little raccoon guy. Apparently, we'll learn his fate next year. We're also almost certain to see another ***Crash Bandicoot*** platform game. (It's been bandied about that Vivendi Universal's plan is to release *Crash* kart racers in odd-numbered years and platformers in even-numbered ones. But who knows how true that is?)

Fans of Gotham's *Conflict: Desert Storm* games will be pleased to learn of a third game, this time sporting the cheeriest of cheery titles: ***Conflict: Missing Presumed Dead***. Only it's set in Vietnam this time.

Ever since *Ico* came out, fans have been clamoring for a sequel. All current information points to the second game, currently dubbed ***Nico***, hitting in 2004.

Winning my vote for silliest title of the year is ***Wild ARMs–Another Code: F***. What the hell does that even mean? We can also expect a ***Wild ARMs*** remake known as ***Wild ARMs–Alter Code: F*** (again, WTF?!?) emerging soon.

Been wondering what happened to the ***Unreal*** franchise? Look for Atari to bring it back by summer.

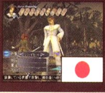
I've heard LucasArts is already talking to Larry Holland about working on ***Secret Weapons Over Normandy 2***, which I'm assuming will be called *Secret Weapons Over Somewhere Different* (not literally, silly.) Also, if the company is smart, it's working on a sequel to ***Gladius***.

You will have read this in a previous issue of the magazine, but the next *Tenchu* will go by the moniker ***Tenchu Kurenai***—which means "crimson," if you were wondering. Speaking of which, I'm counting on Koei's Xbox-only, *Dynasty Warriors*–like ***Crimson Sea*** series to jump ship to PS2 later this year.

Japan and Europe have a bunch of games that may or may not make it here. Let's hope Atlus or Natsume picks these up for release in the States.

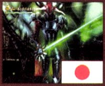
SHADOW HEARTS II

Of all companies, Midway released the original *Shadow Hearts*, a fine RPG. The sequel take us to WWI-era France.



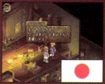
SHADOW TOWER: ABYSS

Shadow Tower sucked on PS1. We gave it a one-half star. Still, screens like these give us hope this isn't *Abyss*-mal.



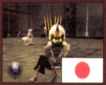
TALES OF DESTINY 2

Will Namco ever release the PS2 *Tales of Destiny 2* here (not to be confused with the different PS1 game)? Doubtful, but still possible.



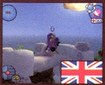
WIZARDRY PREQUEL

Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land was one hardcore, *old-school* RPG. Its prequel is known as *Busin Zero* in Japan.



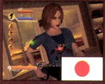
WORMS 3D

At one point, it seemed Sega would release these annelids' first 3D strategy game in the U.S. Too bad it's only in Europe.



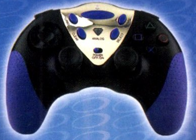
MISTER MOSQUITO 2

Hey, Fresh Games! Listen up! We want our *Mister Mosquito* sequel, dammit! Bloodsucking rules!



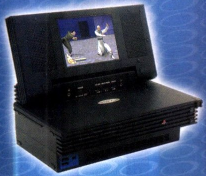
Maximize your Competitive Edge

intec



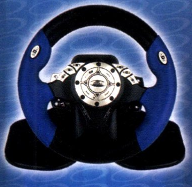
Wireless Controllers

Mini Controllers

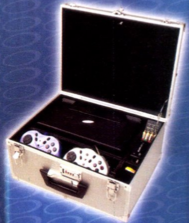


Gaming Screens

Sound Systems



Racing Wheels



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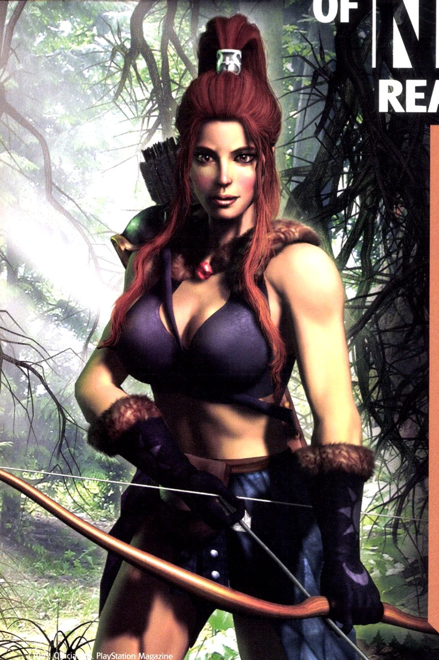
CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

REALMS OF EVERQUEST



If you've been reading *OPM* for the past few months, you know how excited we are for *Champions of Norrath*. After all, we loved *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, and *Champions* plays in much the same hack-n-slash RPG manner—thanks to *Baldur's* developer, Snowblind. In other words, don't let the "EverQuest" in the game's subtitle lead you to believe you're in for another mediocre massively multiplayer online RPG. In fact, no online connection is necessary for you and up to three friends to march *Gauntlet*-style through the 50-plus randomly generated dungeons.

But remember, this is Sony *Online* Entertainment we're talking about. The online element can be *huge* if you want it to be. Actually, *Champions* can be *only* online if you so desire, complete with 100 percent of the offline game's content.

That's right. You can experience every dungeon, every cut-scene, every *every*thing from the offline mode when you play online. Better yet, you don't have to restrict yourself to choosing between the two—you can do both.

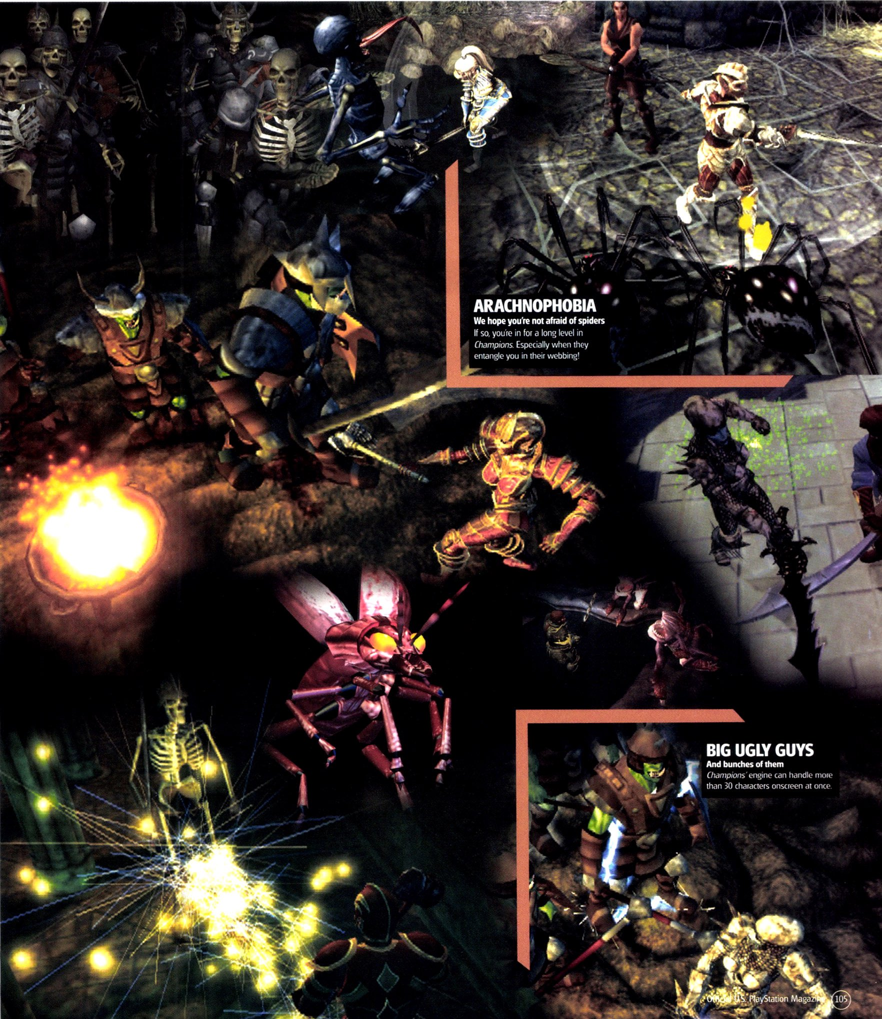
Let's say you started an offline game two hours ago, but you feel like hopping online to continue your quest. You can do so, *and* you can start online in exactly the same place you last saved before you logged on. However, this happens only if you actually host a game.

So, why would you ever wanna jump into an online game that you aren't hosting? A couple of reasons, really. For example, maybe you have three friends living in different parts of the country, and you've agreed to work out a playing schedule that allows you all to play at a designated time. Also, while you can't save your spot in the story, you *can* save the experience and items you've earned while playing online. So even if you're not hosting, you'll return to your offline game significantly more badass.

In order to ensure that you can comfortably distinguish yourself from anyone else onscreen, Snowblind has added a slew of character options. *Champions* offers both male and female versions of five character classes (barbarian warrior, wood elf ranger, high elf cleric, erudite wizard, and dark elf shadow knight), and you can customize their skin, hair style, and hair color in a variety of ways.

The story takes place several hundred years before the *EverQuest* MMORPG, and you begin in Norrath's well-known city of Faydwer. The land is in crisis because orcs and goblins—formerly bitter enemies—have united in an attempt to take over the world.

The adventure takes you and your companions everywhere from an Ewok-like forest village to barren wastelands to a spectacular lair of spiders. You'll find literally thousands upon thousands of uniquely powered weapons and pieces of armor, and you can use special items to further enhance them. Plus, with a revved-up version of the *Dark Alliance* engine, *Champions* looks absolutely spectacular. Make some room on your shelf for this one.



ARACHNOPHOBIA

We hope you're not afraid of spiders

If so, you're in for a long level in *Champions*. Especially when they entangle you in their webbing!

BIG UGLY GUYS

And bunches of them

Champions' engine can handle more than 30 characters onscreen at once.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

THE SANDS OF TIME™

"Prince of Persia Is a Masterpiece..."
– Electronic Gaming Monthly

"A Prime Candidate for Game of the Year."
– Matt Casamassina, ign.com

"Moving the Action Genre to the Next Level."
– Game Informer

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UBISOFT™

200,000 Subscribers Square needed to make a profit from *FFXI*. They hit that number a month after the game's release on PC in Japan.

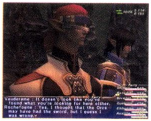
FINAL FANTASY XI

The economics of online play

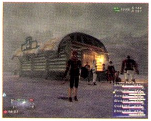
Yes, we know, *Final Fantasy XI* really seems like it'll be one expensive game. On top of the PS2 Hard Drive, which you need in order to play, there's a $12.95 monthly fee. (Plus, you really need a keyboard to get the full experience.) But when you think about it, it's not as bad as it seems.

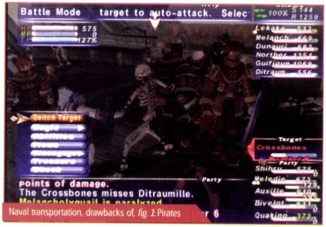
First of all, the HDD will be used for many, many more games than *FFXI*. (New content for *SOCOM II*—some included with the HDD and some made available for download—is just the tip of the iceberg.) And while 13 bucks a month sounds steep, there's so much to do in *FFXI* that it's like a continually changing, always expanding experience; it's almost like a new game every month. And that's not even taking into consideration the periodic release of expansion packs that will add content to the world of Vana'diel (one such expansion, *Rise of the Zilart*, will be packed in with every U.S. copy of *FFXI* at launch). So, no, it's not cheap, but it won't be as expensive as it seems. Honest.

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** Square Enix USA **Release Date:** March



Vauderame : It doesn't look like you've found what you're looking for here either.
Rochefogne : Yes, I thought that the Orcs may have had the sword, but I guess I was wrong.

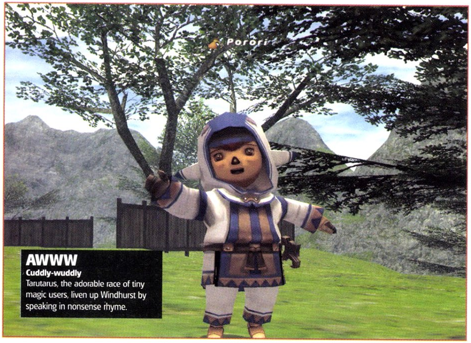




Battle Mode target to auto-attack. Selec

points of damage.
The Crossbones misses Ditraumille.
Melancholyquail is paralyzed.

Naval transportation, drawbacks of, *fig. 1*: Pirates



AWWW

Cuddly-wuddly

Tarutarus, the adorable race of tiny magic users, liven up Windhurst by speaking in nonsense rhyme.

MONSTER HUNTER

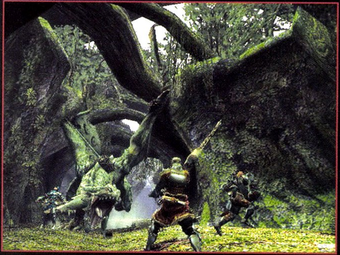
Monster Hunter looks to be a great substitute for anyone who missed out on *Phantasy Star Online*. It's an online hunting game in which, instead of stupid bears or stupider deer, you target enormous dragons.

Not only do you brandish ridiculously massive swords and crossbows to take down the oversized lizards, but you and three buddies can also set up elaborate traps. Lure a dragon into a pile of explosives, for example, or trap it in the ground.

Want another reason to play? How about some cool little cat people! Mind you, we have no idea what they're for (are they non-player characters? can you be one yourself?), but they look so darn cute and cool—especially when a big dragon flies overhead.

Keep an eye out for more *Monster Hunter* info as we trap it.

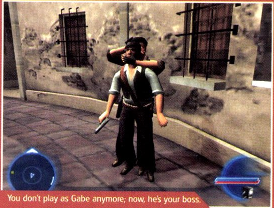
Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** Fall



SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN

With its four-player online co-op features, *The Omega Strain* is something of a refreshing change from the deathmatch-heavy norm. The best part is that it allows you to progress through the story with actual human beings as your teammates. (Incidentally, there was initially some speculation that the game would include deathmatch modes, but Sony has revealed that co-op will be the only mode of online play.) And speaking of that story—well, all you *Syphon Filter* fans will be pleased to know that it's as epic as any of the previous games. Without revealing too much, we can tell you that a commercial corporation has been behind the Syphon Filter virus all along...and Mara Aramov is involved somehow. Unluckily for the fate of the world, she has escaped—and what's worse, the Syphon Filter virus itself is quickly mutating into a supervirus that could put an end to life as we know it. Yeah, that's a bad day in the making.

Pub.: Sony CEA **Dev.:** Sony CEA **Date:** Feb.



You don't play as Gabe anymore; now, he's your boss.

29/245
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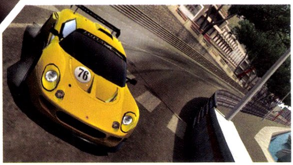
the evolution of
SPEED
DODGE
76
SHOEI
NGK SPARK PLUGS
Garnier

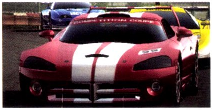
It's survival of the fastest. R: Racing Evolution thrusts you into the intense competition and heated rivalries of high-velocity professional racing. Adapt, or enjoy the exhaust.

Experience the handling of realistic, high performance physics.



Master GT, Rally, Drag and the premier racing circuits.

Fine-tune real world licensed vehicles.



From the developers of Ridge Racer.™

DODGE
Official Licensed Product
GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes

PlayStation®2

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

XBOX

R:RACING EVOLUTION

www.racing-evolution.com

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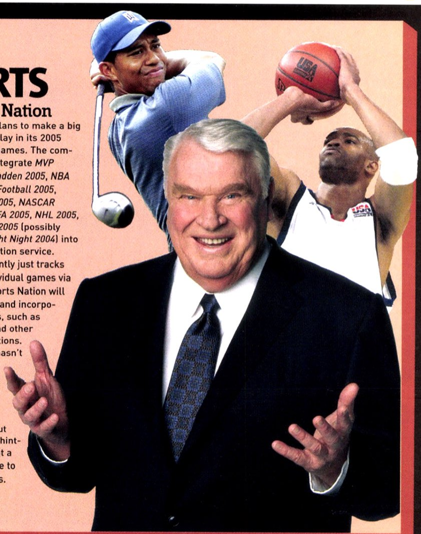
7,465,869 Approximate weight of John Madden, in tons.

EA SPORTS

Birth of a Nation



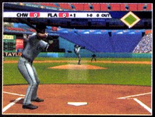
Electronic Arts plans to make a big push for online play in its 2005 brand of sports games. The company means to integrate *MVP Baseball 2004*, *Madden 2005*, *NBA Live 2005*, *NCAA Football 2005*, *March Madness 2005*, *NASCAR Thunder 2005*, *FIFA 2005*, *NHL 2005*, and *Tiger Woods 2005* (possibly even the new *Fight Night 2004*) into the EA Sports Nation service. Although it currently just tracks statistics for individual games via a website, EA Sports Nation will continue to grow and incorporate new features, such as online leagues and other sport-specific options. Additionally, EA hasn't actually confirmed whether it's going to start charging for the online play in its games of 2004, but the company has hinted that it might, at a certain point, have to cover server costs.

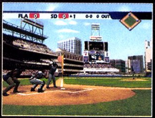
989 SPORTS

Even though its games consistently fall short of the competition, Sony is making a big push to re-establish 989 Sports as one of the top brands. It headed in the right direction with the excellent online-play options for its *2004* series of games, and it plans to continue that trend with its *2005* titles by integrating even more online features and polish. Although none have been officially announced, expect more *MLB*, *NFL GameDay*, *NCAA GameBreaker*, *NHL FaceOff*, *NBA ShootOut*, *NCAA Final Four*, and *World Cup Soccer*.

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2005

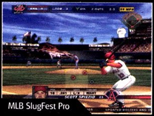
A slew of improvements has been made to Acclaim's perennially mediocre baseball series, which is finally ready for one-on-one online. The pitching and batting have been refined. There's also a new defensive-camera feature that puts you right in the middle of the action, whether you're catching a fly ball or diving for a short chopper in the infield.



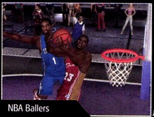


MIDWAY SPORTS

Look for Midway to bring more of its sports lineup into the online realm. The new edition of *NFL Blitz* will again feature online play, as well as support tournaments and other basic options found in the previous game. The same goes for the next *NHL Hitz*, *NBA Ballers*, and *MLB SlugFest Pro* (seen here for the first time anywhere), which will have online play for first time in 2004.



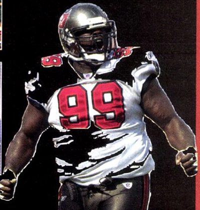
MLB SlugFest Pro



NBA Ballers

ESPN VIDEOGAMES

At this point, you have to wonder what else Visual Concepts can do to improve the online experience for its sports games in 2004. There's already a fully functional website where you can create online leagues, view statistics, and get general updates on what's going on. Right now, Sega plans to integrate these features into *ESPN Major League Baseball* before deciding on what to do to improve the online experience for football, the two basketball games, and hockey. But it's likely there will be more minor refinements than huge additions.



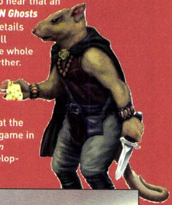
CLISH MACLAVER'S GOSSIP GOSSIP

Rumored online games of 2004

Chances are, a very large percentage of the games we've talked about in this feature will have some kind of online functionality, and it's only going to get cleverer as funky new ideas emerge that allow you to communicate with other gamers.

EverQuest will continue to evolve throughout 2004, with another add-on pack scheduled at some point, which reportedly brings the graphics technology up another notch and into territory closer to that of *Final Fantasy XI*. I'm also hearing that as soon as *Champions of Norrath* is finished, the SOE team is working on a new project, which will be less of a fantasy experience. Early rumors that a ***Planetside*** variant is in the works seem unfounded, but I'm hearing that there's definitely something sci-fi brewing.

Retro fans will be pleased to hear that an online game based on ***Ghouls 'N Ghosts*** is in the works. There are no details on how the online mechanic will work, but it'll be cool to see the whole *Maximo* vibe taken one step further.



LucasArts has gone very quiet about possible ***Star Wars Galaxies*** action in the near future, but here's something interesting: I've heard that the company will announce a new game in 2004—something other than *An Empire Divided*— that is in development for PS3.

STAR WARS GALAXIES

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Language
Violence

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PlayStation®2

REVIEWS

Making the world a more perfect place.

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE GAME OF THE MONTH

SKATE/DIE?

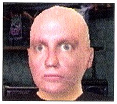
You are the THUG

You probably already know that *Tony Hawk's Underground* is easily the best in the series. In fact, it's so good, it's our game of the month.

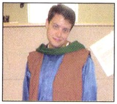
MEET THE CRITICS

JOHN DAVISON
John's looking for a *Newtype* of managing editor, but is sad to see his friend leave.
Current Favorites: *NFSU, SOCOM II, SSX 3*
Favorite Genres: Driving 'n' shooting, but not *True Crime*

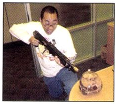
GARY STEINMAN
After five long years, Gary finally had enough. But he'll be back—just you wait!
Current Favorites: *OPM* fans, the best in the world
What's next? Editor-in-chief of *Newtype*, that's what!



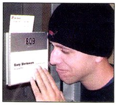
JOE RYBICKI
Joe's girlfriend agreed to marry him in spite of his horrifying *THUG* alter ego.
Current Favorites: *THUG*, making John play *True Crime*
Favorite Genres: Puzzle, Adventure, bye Gary



CHRIS BAKER
Gary told C-Bake he'd stay at the mag if Chris dressed up like a hobbit for him. What a lying sack of....
Current Favorites: *Hobbit*
Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Sports, Strategy



THIERRY (SCOOTER) NGUYEN
Playing terrible games all month has left Scooter confused and violent.
Current Favorites: *The Sims: Bustin' Out*, Mr. Re
Favorite Genres: Games that aren't terrible



GIANCARLO VARANINI
Of all the people Giancarlo has known in this world, Gary is one of them.
Current Favorites: *ESPN Basketball, Amplitude, R&C2*
Favorite Genres: Action, Sports, Eating of Pancakes

REVIEWS

PS2 GAMES

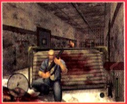
132	.hack//QUARANTINE	★★★★
112	Battlestar Galactica	★★★
114	Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	★★½
133	The Cat in the Hat	★★
114	Crash Nitro Kart	★★★½
112	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	★★½
114	ESPN College Hoops	★★★½
118	Ford Racing 2	★★½
133	Frogger's Adventure: Rescue	★★½
118	Fugitive Hunter	★
120	Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	★★★★
120	Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	★★½
118	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	★½
120	The Hobbit	★★★½
123	The King of Fighters 2000/2001	★★½
123	Kya: Dark Lineage	★★½
124	Legacy of Kain: Defiance	★★½
123	Looney Tunes: Back in Action	★
116	Manhunt	★★★½
111	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	★★★½
125	Midway Arcade Treasures	★★★½
125	MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	★½
125	NCAA Final Four 2004	★★
126	NCAA March Madness 2004	★★★★
127	Need for Speed: Underground	★★★★½
129	R: Racing Evolution	★★★★
126	The Sims: Bustin' Out	★★★★½
128	Spawn Armageddon	★½
128	SpyHunter 2	★★★
130	Super Trucks Racing	★½
130	Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	★★
122	Tony Hawk's Underground	★★★★★
131	True Crime: Streets of L.A.	★★
130	Virtual On Marz	★★
130	Wheel of Fortune	★★½
113	Whiplash	★★★½
133	World Championship Pool 2004	★★
132	WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	★★★½

PS1 GAMES

133	MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	★
133	NBA Shootout 2004	★

PERIPHERALS

133	Clash Pads	★★★
133	Control Element	★★★★
133	FPS Master	★★★½
133	iType2 Keyboard Controller	★★★★
133	Recoil	★★½
133	Visual Entertainment Generator	★★★½



116
SHOCKING!
Manhunt is over the top
It will make you feel dirty

124
SUCKING!
Kain and Raz get defiant
Is it just more of the same?

127
RACING!
NFS goes underground
Too much of a good thing?

MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN

Staring at the fading sun

Publisher: EA Games **Developer:** EALA Studio **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Pearl Harbor simultaneously represents the finest and worst moments of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*. The pure, relentless cacophony of gunfire, bomb blasts, heroic yawps, and dizzying visuals make for an awe-inspiring experience—the first time you play it. Its presentation astounds you, but the actual gameplay disappoints: The Pearl Harbor level reflects how the game is an amazing assault on the senses, but also how it is a step back from *Frontline*.

The biggest knock against *Rising Sun* is the brutally short tour of duty. A total of nine missions makes it seem bigger than *Frontline*'s six, but each of those six has multiple steps. *Rising Sun*'s nine missions are exactly what they are: nine missions. Well, Pearl Harbor counts as two. So, you really have only eight missions total. They're not all of equal quality, either; while some missions stand out, others are hampered by clichéd areas.

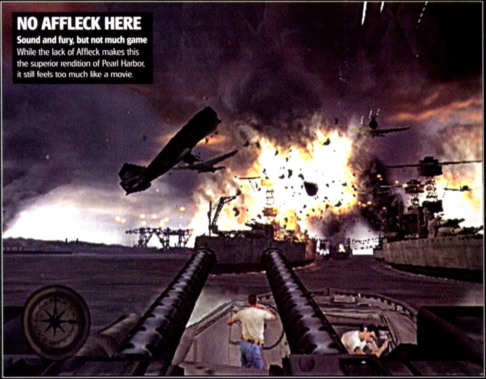
RISING ONLINE

Just more of the same

Co-op is pretty fun (even though it makes an easy game a lot easier), but the online stuff is pretty blasé. If you thought deathmatch needed jungles and old guns, then you'll love the online play. Otherwise, it feels very "been there, done that."

Some levels resemble those in *Frontline* (like Fall of the Philippines, with its wrecked streets and all), and others give *Rising Sun* a distinct identity. Both Pistol Pete and A Bridge on the River Kwai are well-made in presentation and design. They both have fantastic jungle environments and good enemy placement, and both allow you to do cool things like sabotage a bridge, drop boulders on trucks, or sneak up on howitzers in the tall grass. These missions are very playable and recall cinematic moments from films such as, well, *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *The Thin Red Line*.

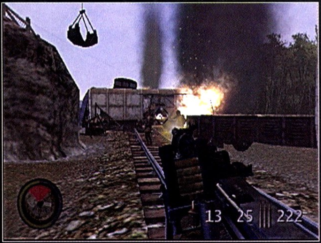
But other levels suffer in quality. Midnight Raid on Guadalcanal begins well (with a night raid via boat), but the skillful orchestration of on-boat and on-coast combat soon gives way to a pedestrian, darkly lit search-and-destroy mission. Singapore Sling puts you undercover with a German uniform, but it also bogs you down with an uninteresting "stealth" beginning, in which "stealth" translates to a silenced pistol that fires one shot at a time. In Search for Yamashita's Gold seems promising at first—until it becomes a boring romp through some clichéd catacombs.



NO AFFLECK HERE

Sound and fury, but not much game

While the lack of Affleck makes this the superior rendition of Pearl Harbor, it still feels too much like a movie.



What doesn't help the sometimes-uninspired design is the A.I., which seems more imbecilic than intelligent. After the initial shock of "These inscrutable Japanese charge with bayonets and hide in holes in the ground!" wears off, you notice that the mighty Imperial Army is staffed with the same ignorant buffoons as in earlier shooters. Sure, some of them are smart enough to kick grenades back at you and occasionally use cover, yet most remain motionless and let you shoot them. And they still don't notice nearby friends being capped by your sniper rifle.

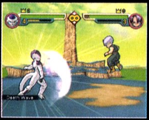
It's not a bad game, but it's also not the be-all, end-all Pacific-theater FPS we expected. The primary emphasis on gloss over gameplay suggests that *Rising Sun* is geared more toward the tyro rather than the savant. It's a shame, because it has some fantastic moments and is by far the most harrowing presentation of war on PS2. But once the shell shock wears off, it's child's play.

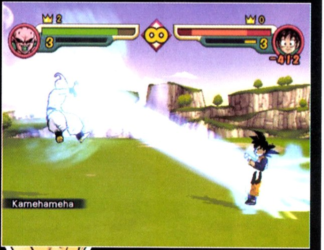
Thierry Nguyen

★★★½

Kamehamehuh?

www.scifi.com/battlestar
Go here for info on the new revamp of the old show. Personally, we have our doubts.





DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI 2

A not-quite-serious fighter

Publisher: Atari
Developer: Dimps
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

How many fighting games does one really need? With *Soul Calibur 2* in existence, exactly one. Maybe two, if you count *Virtua Fighter 4: Evo*. One thing is certain: *Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2* needs to be miles away from the game library of the serious fighting enthusiast. While by no means broken, its fighting system is full of easy-to-execute moves. As a result, matches basically boil down to ridiculous standoffs that are won by whoever can bust out kamehamehas the fastest. Not exactly the best way to channel your competitive spirit.

That said, *Budokai 2* isn't without some redeeming qualities. As mentioned before, the fighting system isn't completely busted—the controls are smooth and responsive, the special moves are intuitive, and the cool movements that should be automatic (like levitating) are. Also new to this iteration is the ability for fighters to literally punch one another through the environments, and yes, it's kind of a riot. In one stage, for instance, you can slam your opponent into a cliff wall, causing an avalanche. For those who watch this *Dragon Ball* stuff on television, it all looks very convincing, and I imagine hardcore fans of the series will dig all the references.

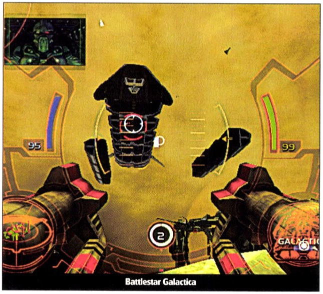
The game's look certainly helps out in this regard. If you're at all like me, you might think you know next to jack about *Dragon Ball*. However, you know more than you think. The faithful production values make this fact hit home. The pyrotechnics accompanying the supermoves look disturbingly familiar, and when said moves' names appear in the onscreen text box, they won't seem entirely alien. The character models are crafted to look almost exactly like they do in the cartoon series, and the voices are right on.

What might come as a surprise is that *Budokai 2*'s single-player mode is actually pretty well developed. While it lacks the cut-scene-heavy focus of its predecessor, the new board-game-like approach actually makes for a pretty compelling experience. You take turns moving around a board, controlling Goku and his companions, whose clashes with enemy game pieces are played out via the fighting engine. Depending on how well you can deal with the fighting system, it's quite possible you'll find yourself pretty absorbed by this mode, in spite of your better efforts. In any case, it's better than any cheesy mailed-in story mode. It's quite strategic during its best moments, and it makes you forget that you're really just playing a dinky fighting game.

But c'mon, you aren't seriously going to get *Budokai 2* for its single-player mode, are you? You'd have to be a pretty big *DBZ* fan to do so. If that's indeed you, then you'll love this game—kindergarten fighting mechanics and all. Otherwise, just keep playing *Soul Calibur 2*.

Miguel Lopez

★★◐



Battlestar Galactica

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games
Developer: Warthog
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

I have very few memories of *Battlestar Galactica*, but I do recall glimpsing at ships zapping each other on television and seeing those menacing Cylons shooting everywhere at the beginning of the Universal Studios tour in 1988. So, while I don't possess the die-hard nostalgia that would compel me to buy the entire TV series on DVD, I do remember liking what I saw. Although the upcoming relaunch is questionable (Cylons are hot chicks now?), Warthog has created a decent game that serves as a sort of prequel to the franchise as a whole.

And this extremely solid space shooter features a neat variety of pilotable ships—you go from flying a basic Viper fighter to a Cobra bomber to a more advanced Viper fighter to even a Cylon raider ship. Missions include destroying a squad of Cylons, manning the turrets of the *Galactica* during a firefight, and flying into a Cylon fleet undercover. The game is a prequel to the original show (you actually play as a young Lorne Greene), and it has an interesting plot for a space shooter.

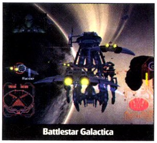
BSG's production values are pretty spectacular. Early on, there's a mission where you have to attack a seemingly derelict Cylon battleship—the massive ship and its gorgeous lighting effects serve as a great example of how beautiful the game looks.

So far, *BSG* is solid all around. Well, except for the difficulty. Fact is, *BSG* is hard. How hard? The first mission alone took me over an hour to complete, mainly because it required me to keep someone alive—someone who usually gets killed *really* easily. Protection missions, like escort missions, are the bane of space-sim players, and *BSG* has quite a few of them. Sometimes you need to destroy a certain Cylon raider, but every Cylon fightercraft decides to ignore everyone else and try to kill you. In one of the turret-manning missions, you need to have godlike timing to jump between the various turrets and shoot down the incoming Cylons.

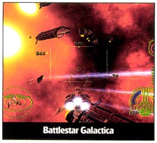
BSG basically feels like playing a solid, old-school *Wing Commander* game, except instead of giant space cats taunting you in combat, you get cool Cylons muttering stuff like "prepare to annihilate the race known as man." But you may not want to take off if you can't stand absurdly hard games.

Thierry Nguyen

★★★



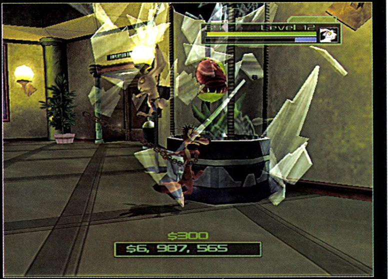
Battlestar Galactica



Battlestar Galactica

OVERHEARD

"Bang your head against the stage / Like you never did before / Make it ring, make it bleed / Make it really sore." –Metallica, "Whiplash"



WHIPLASH

Funny-weird *and* funny-ha-ha

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

$7, 700
$6, 955, 345

Level 18
$6, 668, 960

There's a surreal sweetness to Spanx and Redmond that makes everything in this game very enjoyable.

It's nothing sappy, mind you. In fact, everything in *Whiplash* revolves around the abundant abuse you can dole out to this oddball duo. Even the premise is downright twisted: After endless years of torturous testing, a crazed weasel and a wisecracking bunny are en route to their painful end in the Genetic Recombinator. They escape (naturally) and, chained together, embark on a quest to destroy their captors, the diabolical Genron Corporation.

Getting revenge is easy enough. Taking control of Spanx—a wiry weasel who pops and ticks madly, thanks to all the electroshock therapy he's been subjected to—you swing Redmond the rabbit round and round, pound him into foes, light him on fire, flush him down filthy toilets, freeze him, electrocute him, and cover him in chocolate to entice gluttonous guards. (That's not even a full list!)

It sounds horrendous. It sounds abusive and quite possibly unfunny. But it's actually incredibly amusing. From the chuckle-worthy cut-scenes to the smirk-inducing animations, *Whiplash* succeeds in doing something that's elusive in most games: being intentionally funny. You can credit that quirky sweetness I alluded to above, which stems from the obvious love that was poured into creating these critters. They don't seem focus-grouped to death. Rather, they're labors of love, and it shows—which makes all their suffering that much more palatable.

Too bad the game doesn't live up to the characters. Strip away Spanx and Redmond, and you're left with a by-the-numbers platformer. Alongside the occasionally clever brainteaser, you're subjected to a surplus of uninspired jumping puzzles. What's more, since the game is set within the Genron headquarters, too many of the environments look—and play—alike. Another problem: With such large, interconnected levels, *Whiplash* could have used a map system that doesn't require a cartographical genius to decipher.

Still, it's not often that I come across a quirky pair of creatures that bring to mind one of my all-time favorite game critters: Abe from those PS1 *Oddworld* games. For that reason alone, *Whiplash* is worth checking out.

Gary Steinman

★★★½

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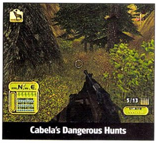
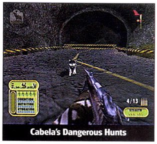
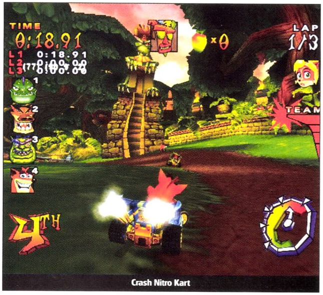
22" The approximate length of a fully grown bandicoot.



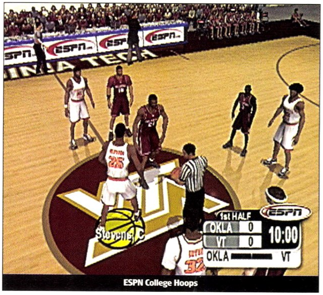
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts



Cabela's Dangerous Hunts



Crash Nitro Kart



ESPN College Hoops

CABELA'S DANGEROUS HUNTS

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Sand Grain
MSRP: $29.99 **ESRB:** Teen

If you've ever seen the TV show *When Animals Attack*, then you already have an idea of what *Cabela's Dangerous Hunts* is all about. Instead of hunting docile deer, you go face-to-face with cougars, bears, moose, hyenas, and an assortment of other creatures that come charging at the first sight of a hunter. Surprisingly, these rabid animals and their taste for blood make for a better hunting experience that doesn't exclusively revolve around sitting quietly in a single area for dozens of minutes at a time.

Along with a traditional career mode, there's a mode that takes advantage of the animals' aggressive natures. There are small sections where you have to kill certain animals in the immediate vicinity of a portal (yes, a portal) in order to open the next area. It's very fast paced and probably about as close as a hunting game will ever get to mimicking a typical first-person shooter.

Still, it's a hunting game at heart. A significant amount of time is spent tracking the animals, and the actual shooting is fairly mundane. Also, there are occasional problems with hit detection on the animals when a shot doesn't properly register.

Cabela's Dangerous Hunts is undoubtedly meant primarily for the hunting aficionado, but the changes in the animals' demeanor make it more bearable for someone starting to take an interest in the sport.

Giancarlo Varanini

★★½

CRASH NITRO KART

Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: Vicarious Visions
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Four years ago, everyone loved *Crash Team Racing*—few would dispute its status as the best kart-racing title on PS1. Crash also stars in the best PS2 kart racer ever released...although that's not saying much when your closest competition is *Freaky Flyers*.

If you like *CNK*...

Try *Crash Team Racing*

"So solid, [it makes] the license nearly irrelevant." ★★★★★

If you played *CTR*, you already know what *CNK* is about. In fact, it seems Vicarious Visions did all it could to emulate the Naughty Dog classic and just added a PS2 coat of paint. There's nothing wrong with that—it's just that the few real signs of innovation don't add much to the game.

For one thing, you can now perform a boost coming straight out of a powerslide if you effectively time a hit of the other shoulder button. Screwing up can cost you some time, but when you get it down, you'll find yourself executing powerslides when you don't really need to, just for the burst of speed (is this logical?). And linking boosts can add a bit of speed each time.

Instituting the team concept in *CNK* is a good idea—it just falls a bit flat. By sticking near someone on your team throughout a race (by Tiny if you're Cortex, for example), you eventually earn the chance at unlimited weaponry for 10 seconds or so. A cool feature, but it really has nothing to do with teamwork.

The game's tracks are largely forgettable, but none outright suck, and the ones that work do have their memorable moments. On one course, you can risk driving right by a sandworm in order to save time, but you may not be lucky enough to avoid being bitten and thrown into the air. At other times, you're riding upside down at the crest of a loop or triggering an environmental trap by hitting exclamation-point boxes. This is especially fun in multiplayer, when the game gets really competitive...well, except when it comes to the battle modes. In many cases, the large tracks make it tough to find someone else, let alone to shoot a missile up his butt.

Regardless, *CNK* should prove enjoyable enough for most casual gamers. It's just too bad the new *Mario Kart* will never hit PS2....

Chris Baker

★★★½

Crash Nitro Kart

Crash Nitro Kart

ESPN COLLEGE HOOPS

Publisher: Sega Sports
Developer: Kush Games
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

ESPN College Hoops has all the makings of a great college basketball game. Its legacy mode is probably the best franchiselike mode of any of the college games, and there are some really awesome extras you can purchase in the school-store section. But it all starts to falter with the gameplay, which generically mimics the sport and ultimately falls short of feeling like an actual college basketball game.

Granted, *ESPN College Hoops* isn't just a palette-swapped version of *ESPN NBA Basketball*. Teams will play in different types of zone defenses, and indeed, you have to use some college strategy to beat them—the key word being "some." At times, you'll find that you need to pass the ball around the outside to open up a hole in the defense or to draw defenders out. But there isn't much emphasis placed on passing (thankfully so, considering that the passing engine in Sega Sports' basketball games needs to be more responsive), and it quickly becomes apparent that you can play *College Hoops* much as if you were playing an NBA game. That doesn't make it a horrible game by any means, but it needs to do more to distinguish itself from its NBA counterparts.

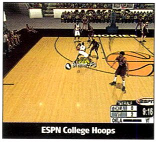
Plus, most of the game's modes are executed really well, particularly the aforementioned legacy mode. It has a useful new feature that lets you recruit and scout for upcoming player prospects over the course of the season as opposed to waiting until the end of the season to do everything at once. In addition, points accumulated during this and other modes can be spent on different things at the student store, such as new arenas, dynasty teams, and even mascots. The slam session mode presents an interesting take on a typical skills competition and almost plays more like *Dance Dance Revolution* than a basketball game—either way, it's a nice diversion.

The commentary also far exceeds what the competition offers. In fact, how natural it sounds can be downright spooky, especially the way the play-by-play man seemingly never repeats himself over the course of an entire game.

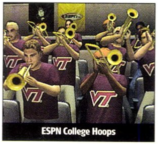
ESPN College Hoops isn't a bad game at all—it just needs a few more gameplay tweaks to establish itself as a true college basketball game.

Giancarlo Varanini

★★★½



ESPN College Hoops



ESPN College Hoops

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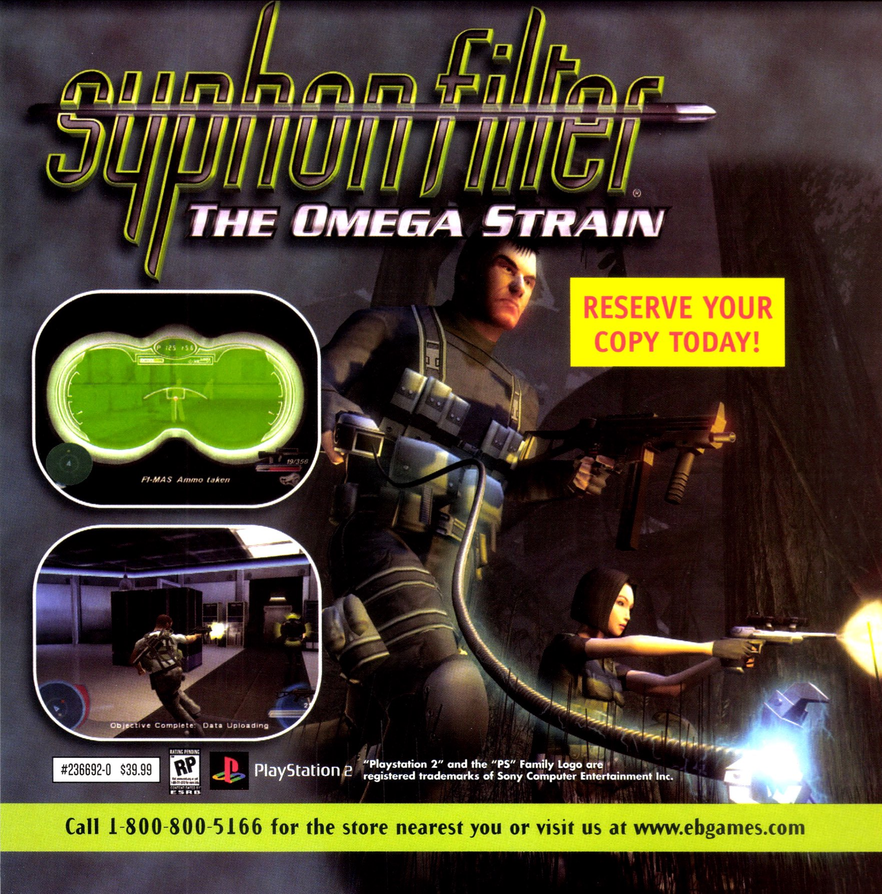
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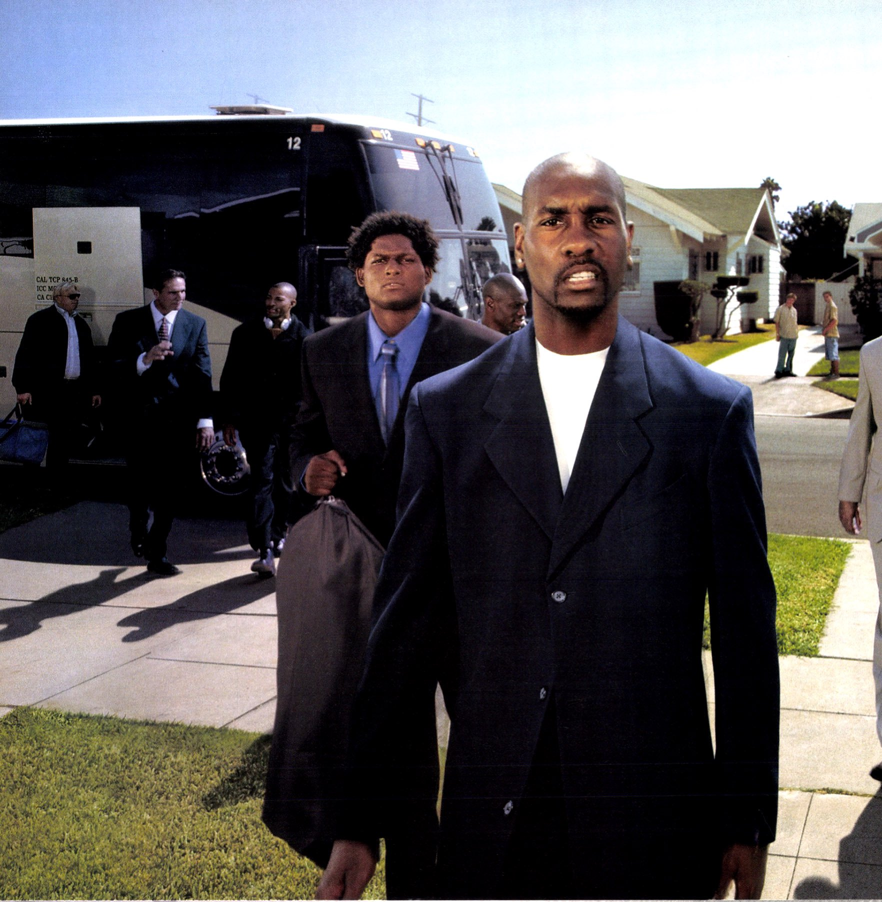

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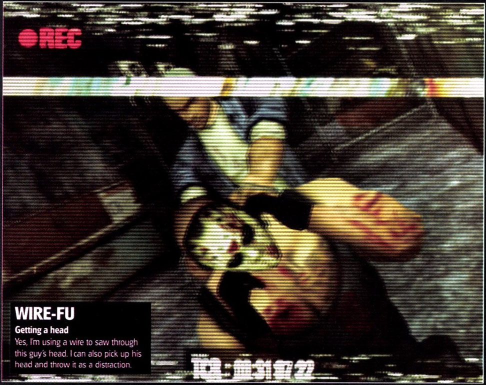
NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH...
Manhunter, the 1986 film based on Thomas Harris' novel *Red Dragon*, which was again made into a movie in 2002.

MANHUNT

Quite possibly the most uncomfortable game you'll ever play

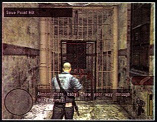
Publisher: Rockstar Games **Developer:** Rockstar North **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature



WIRE-FU

Getting a head

Yes, I'm using a wire to saw through this guy's head. I can also pick up his head and throw it as a distraction.



Almost there, baby! Chew your way through

Besides the shocking, desensitizing violence that borders on pornographic (there's no actual sex, but there is plenty of penetration and spraying of bodily fluids, all viewed from lurid camera angles), *Manhunt* turns out to be a pretty solid game. While it definitely doesn't approach the genius of the *GTA* franchise, it certainly isn't as terrible as, say, *State of Emergency*.

Manhunt can be described as Jean-Claude Van Damme's *Hard Target*—if it were directed by David Fincher. As James Earl Cash, you are "executed," only to be revived and dumped by the Director onto the decayed streets of Carcer City. He's hired gangs to hunt you down, and your task is to stealthily execute each hunter for his amusement. Each grisly execution is displayed as a mini snuff film—complete with grainy video and gobs of blood splattering on the lens.

The actual gameplay is standard stealth action; Cash can hide in shadows, throw things to distract enemies, and make noise to lure them. Cash also has a radar that shows enemies' locations based on the noise they're making. (To be fair, there's no radar in the "hardcore" difficulty setting.) As an interesting gimmick, *Manhunt* supports the USB headset. With the headset, the Director's comments are heard only through the earpiece (mimicking Cash's in-game earpiece). Furthermore, speaking into the mic will make generic noise (there's no voice recognition), so instead of banging walls and throwing bottles, you can yell to attract enemies.

The "*Metal Gear Snuff*" half of *Manhunt* is the weaker part of the game. The novelty of sneaking around and executing random thugs wears off early—especially when you find yourself in yet another dilapidated street, sitting in another shadowy corner with the same weapon for which you've repeatedly seen the execution animation, waiting for another guy to come your way. Since the A.I. isn't terribly smart, your enemies always fall for that trick. While there are still genuine moments of tension (i.e., getting spotted by three guys at once or seeing a gang member walk right past you), *Manhunt* starts feeling uninspired.

Thankfully, Rockstar North adds different mission scenarios and levels to the mix, making the overall game more interesting. When Cash gets his hands on actual firearms, *Manhunt* slowly de-emphasizes its pure stealth elements and starts giving you more action-packed situations, such as escorting someone through town or saving civilians. Even the enemies get smarter; near the end, you're pitted against a ruthlessly efficient gang that's outfitted with heavy weapons, radios, and smarts that make them call for backup in an instant, flank you from different sides, and even fire into shadows to flush you out.

Subject matter aside, *Manhunt* is, honestly, a solidly constructed third-person affair that goes from nearly boring to, well, actually pretty good near the end. But the real question is whether you'll want to play it due to its violent subject matter. I generally (and surprisingly) enjoyed playing *Manhunt*, but afterward, I did feel the need to take multiple showers and watch a bajillion old *Monchichi* episodes to cleanse my mind.

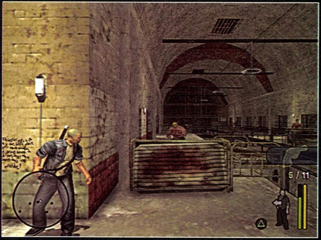
Thierry Nguyen

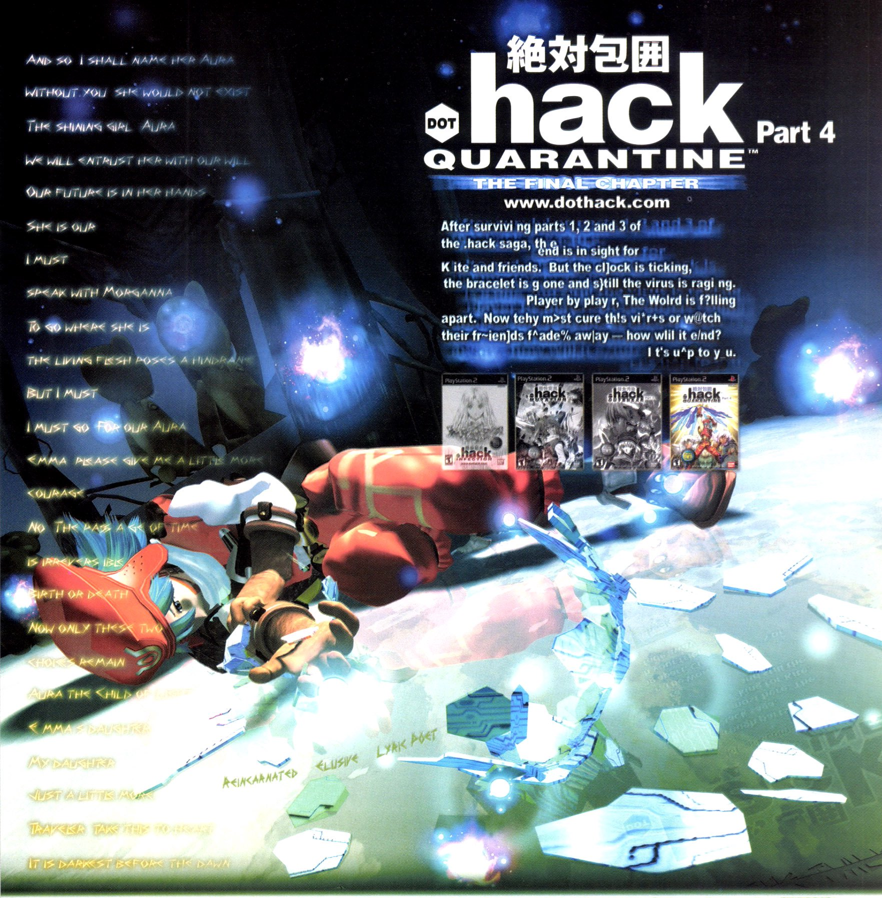
★★★½

NO AO?

ESRB only goes up to "Mature"

If nothing else, *Manhunt* proves that the ESRB rating system is wonky. If the possibly puerile, yet most certainly graphic violence didn't merit an AO rating, then I don't know what will. Really, no AO for a game in which you use a crowbar to create an anal fissure?




AND SO I SHALL NAME HER AURA
WITHOUT YOU SHE WOULD NOT EXIST
THE SHINING GIRL AURA
WE WILL ENTRUST HER WITH OUR WILL
OUR FUTURE IS IN HER HANDS
SHE IS OUR
I MUST
SPEAK WITH MORGANNA
TO GO WHERE SHE IS
THE LIVING FLESH POSES A HINDRANCE
BUT I MUST
I MUST GO FOR OUR AURA
EMMA PLEASE GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE
COURAGE
NO THE PASS A GE OF TIME
IS IRREVERS IBLE
BIRTH OR DEATH
NOW ONLY THESE TWO
CHOICES REMAIN
AURA THE CHILD OF
EMMA S DAUGHTER
MY DAUGHTER
JUST A LITTLE MORE
TRAVELER TAKE THIS TO HEART
IT IS DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN
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their fr~ien]ds f^ade% aw|ay — how wlil it e/nd?
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Violence

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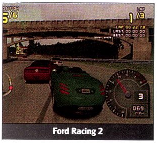
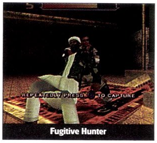
Get it?
Mr. Re?
That's priceless.

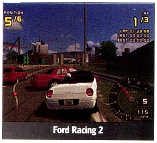
THAT'S A LOAD OFF
J.K. Rowland has revealed that the next *Harry Potter* book will be out in 2004...and it won't be as huge as the last couple.



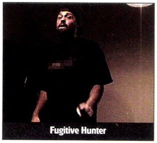
Ford Racing 2



Fugitive Hunter



Ford Racing 2



Fugitive Hunter

FORD RACING 2

Publisher: Gotham Games
Developer: Empire
MSRP: $14.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Say what you will about *Ford Racing 2*, but one thing is absolutely incontrovertible: You can't buy a better new PS2 racing game for less money.

Of course, you can't buy a *worse* new PS2 racing game for less money either, because you can't buy *any* other new PS2 racing game for less than 15 bucks. So maybe that's not exactly the most useful description.

Look, if you've noted the price, you can't possibly be expecting much from this game. And even if you have a bizarre sense of value, you're still talking about a racing game whose entire garage is drawn from Ford stock. A few gems like the recently announced Ford GT notwithstanding, that's not a terribly fabulous lineup.

That said, the game's surprisingly playable. No, please, for your own sanity, don't expect anything approaching the quality of the better racers on PS2. But the handling and sense of speed are noticeably different between different models of cars, a feat some racing games twice *Ford*'s price have trouble with! Some of the tracks have some particularly enjoyable segments, and the process of opening up new cars (you have to beat 17 challenges to get that GT, by the way) is occasionally somewhat innovative.

Of course, half the cars feel like they're always about to roll, and all of them have a first-person perspective that is bizarrely close to the ground. But come on...what do you expect for 15 bucks?

Joe Rybicki

★★◐

FUGITIVE HUNTER

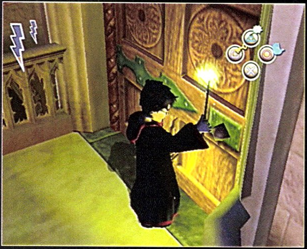
Publisher: Encore
Developer: Black Ops Entertainment
MSRP: $29.99 **ESRB:** Mature

The most delightful and relevant feature of *Fugitive Hunter* (besides the chance for gamers to exorcise their post-9/11 demons by confronting and arresting the notorious Osama Bin Laden) is Mr. Re's elegy about the search for Bin Laden. In a mere six minutes and five seconds, the talented Mr. Re freestyles about America's confusion and anger towards Bin Laden and Al-Quaeda, and how *Fugitive Hunter* delivers much-needed closure to gamers everywhere. One cannot help but be caught up in Re's toothless glee as he weaves such elegant couplets as "Osama Bin Laden / where you been hidin' / Looking for you / on the PS2." While these words don't sound inspiring on paper, their presentation on the screen is filled with absolute sincerity and a bit of solemnity that is rarely seen in most modern verse, much less most games. Gamers are also graced with another piece of Mr. Re's freestyle talents: a video that demonstrates Mr. Re isn't alone in his anger towards Bin Laden, as several members of his crew dance in response to his wonderful word-weaving.

If only *Fugitive Hunter*, the game, wasn't saddled with broken missions, pathetic animations, a sorry fighting system and a sorrier button-mashing mode. It's nigh-criminal for a game of such low stature to be attached to such a brilliant form of musical expression. Don't buy this for the game, but buy it to support the struggling Mr. Re.

Thierry Nguyen

★



HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

Harry flunks out of Hogwarts

Publisher: EA Games
Developer: Warthog
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Certain things in games drive me completely up the wall. Chief among them is being forced to sit through cinematics—especially when they don't really impart any significant information.

So, imagine what a treat it was for me to fire up *Sorcerer's Stone* and discover that I was going to be forced to watch a cinematic every time Harry walked through a door.

I'm not exaggerating. For some unfathomable reason (the only halfway sensible explanation I can imagine is that it tries to disguise loading), any time you want to open a door, Harry will approach it slowly, pause for... I dunno, dramatic effect?...and then slowwwwwly push the door open, step through, and wait patiently while the door closes.

Every. Single. Time.

And don't get me started on the Alohomora unlocking spell, which adds another excruciating cinematic in front of the door-opening ordeal as you watch a badly animated key levitate and turn in a bizarrely outsized lock.

These are just two examples of the trying experiences this game puts you through. I really enjoyed *Chamber of Secrets*, and I'm absolutely flabbergasted that *Sorcerer's Stone* is so very much worse. I figure it's gotta have something to do with the change of developers, but the architecture and much of the gameplay seems virtually identical to the last game—so why is this one so much worse?

It's even graphically worse: The look isn't nearly as crisp as *Chamber*'s, and the framerate is absolutely appalling. But most unbelievable is the fact that there's almost nothing here I would classify as *fun*. It's as though the developers were so committed to following the plot of the movie exactly (which the game most certainly does) that they forgot tween-oriented platformers are supposed to be, you know, entertaining.

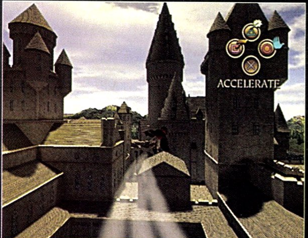
The game seems more about doing school-related chores than anything else. I would imagine that the last thing this game's target audience wants to do after coming home from school is *more school*. I know *I* hated it, and I haven't been in school for years.

I felt like I spent as much of my playing time walking from place to place (that includes opening all those doors) as I did actually *doing* anything. That would be palatable if there were plenty of diversions along the way (there aren't) or if the parts where I was actually doing something were fun enough (they're not). Even after finally getting a broomstick to cruise around the Hogwarts grounds, I got bored quickly, simply because there just isn't that much to *do*.

Honestly, I think I'd rather play the PS1 version of *Sorcerer's Stone* than this uninspired, uninteresting mess. If you're an ultraserious *Potter* fan, you may disagree; me, I'm just holding out for the next game.

Joe Rybicki

★◐



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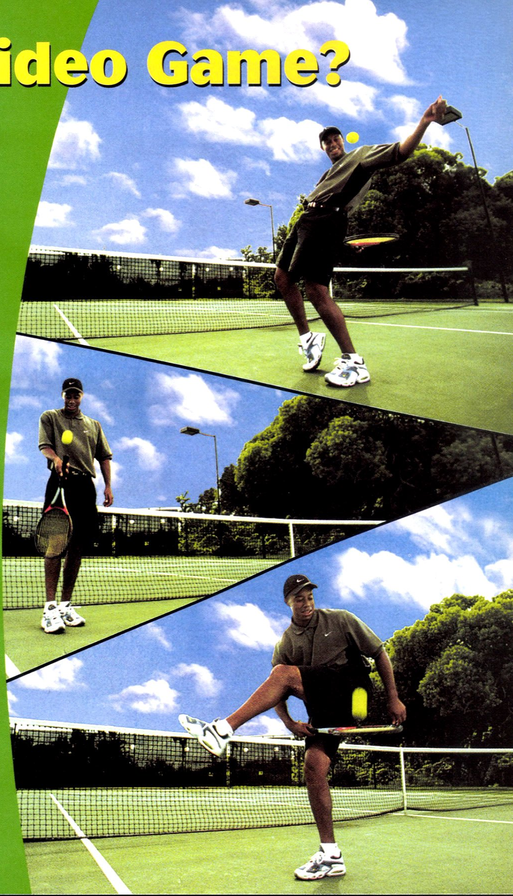

You can give Tiger Woods a tennis racket, but he knows that golf is the game that's right for him. So how does Tiger know which computer and video games are OK to play? He checks the rating on every game box...And so should you!

Computer and video game ratings have two parts: **rating symbols**, which tell you what age group the game is appropriate for and **content descriptors**, which tell you about specific content elements that may be of interest or concern.

So the next time you're choosing a game, check the rating and the content descriptors. And like Tiger Woods, play the game that's right for you.

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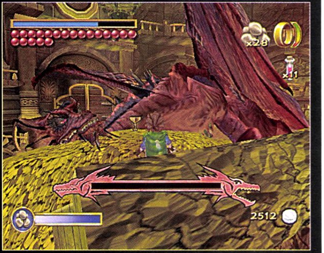
What has it got in its pocketses?

DID YOU KNOW?
Years before Greedo shot first, Tolkien revised *The Hobbit* to make Gollum meaner, to fit in better with *LOTR*.



THE HOBBIT

Bilbo faces a little bit of everything

Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: Inevitable
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Can you believe it's taken this long for someone to adapt *The Hobbit*? With all the goblin cleaving, spider slaying, and dragon fooling to be had, it makes for perfect videogame fodder. Inevitable's version is by no means perfect, but it does do a fine job of realizing Bilbo Baggins' Middle-earth adventure.

Truth be told, my hopes weren't so high going in. The Bilbo I've been a fan of for close to my entire life isn't supposed to look like a rejected *Ape Escape* hero (he's 51...not 15). Then again, this is meant to be a children's story, so I'll give the poor character design a break. Besides, it's the gameplay that really matters, right?

The Hobbit offers a surprisingly diverse range of action while managing to stay relatively faithful to J.R.R. Tolkien's classic fantasy adventure. Platforming elements comprise the greater part of the game, which inherently results in simple yet interesting puzzle solving. Thus, you're presented with quite a bit of rope jumping—moments I'd like a lot better if they actually controlled well and didn't cause so many cheap deaths (the imprecise camera sure doesn't help).

Bilbo also does his fair share of "Stinging" once he picks up the sword that will one day lead his nephew into the heart of Mordor. He never fought this much in the book, but the extra action is definitely welcome in *The Hobbit*'s game version—even if the melee is rather simple and takes some getting used to.

As a thief, Bilbo also does his best Solid Snake impression in some of the game's more stealthy areas. These can be reasonably suspenseful, especially in the early levels before he acquires that magic Ring that goes on to cause such a big hubbub 60 years later. Adding a bit of tension is the fact that you can only equip Isildur's Bane for limited amounts of time—by no means something described in the book, but whatever....

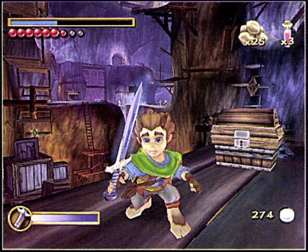
Actually, despite the game's awful character design and occasional change for the sake of gameplay, it's *The Hobbit*'s faithfulness to its source material that makes it more than run-of-the-mill. Almost every chapter is represented with its own one- to two-hour level (a bit *too* long in cases like Laketown), from the unexpected party in Hobbiton to the Battle of Five Armies in the shadow of Lonely Mountain. It should take you at least as long to play this game as it does to read the book.

Thankfully, Inevitable took extra time to ensure that *The Hobbit*'s best level is the one that *should* be its best. Bilbo's adventures in Smaug's lair combine a beautiful treasure-filled room with some very tense moments as you try to avoid the dragon's great-looking fire. It's everything you would have hoped it could be.

It's a shame the team couldn't do more with Gollum than introduce us to him in a cutscene, and Beorn the "skin-changer" shows up way too late. But these are just the geeky nitpicks of a guy who owns a Gandalf statue. Somehow, I don't think most people who play this will be so scrutinizing.

Chris Baker

★★★½



Funkmaster Flex's DHF

Goblin Commander

Funkmaster Flex's DHF

Goblin Commander

FUNKMASTER FLEX'S DIGITAL HITZ FACTORY

Publisher: XS Games
Developer: Jester
MSRP: $19.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Geez, these things are popping up everywhere. Not so much a game as it is an application, *Digital Hitz Factory* takes the premise of *MTV Music Generator* and runs with it.

This isn't the simplest music-creation tool on the market, nor is it the most in-depth. But it does have a number of features most of its competitors can only gape at.

Dig this: With *Digital Hitz Factory* and the optional USB mic, you can actually put *your own voice* into your mixes. Of course, you're recording to a memory card, so you're not going to be able to sing all the way through a song, but being able to create your own samples quickly and easily is huge.

An even bigger deal is the Voice 2 Music option, which takes any melody—whether sung into the mic or recorded through a direct line in—and converts it into an electronic format. In other words, you can hum a tune, record it, and then tell the software to play the melody back to you using a full horn section or a single violin or a heavily distorted electric guitar. It may take more than a few tries to get the software to recognize the melody accurately, but it's a way-cool toy for the armchair musician who thinks he's seen everything.

All in all, *Digital Hitz Factory* is one of the most comprehensive entries in the music-creation genre. It's certainly solid enough to tide you over until that inevitable day when a console can be turned into a complete recording studio.

Joe Rybicki

★★★★

GOBLIN COMMANDER UNLEASH THE HORDE

Publisher: Jaleco
Developer: Jaleco
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Goblin Commander is a noble effort to deliver a playable real-time strategy for PS2, but it still proves that PC is king when it comes to RTS games.

GC has some pretty spiffy features, such as direct control, which lets you directly move troops with the analog stick (in addition to ordering them to go somewhere). The lack of harvesting (you get money just by destroying things) translates into a good focus on tactics, and the control scheme in general is quite useable (though flawed—why can't I group goblins into custom attack groups?). It's just that the rest of the game feels too "bleh." If this were on a PC, it'd be laughed off the market.

In addition to its gameplay, missions, and controls, *GC*'s A.I. needs work. My enemy never goes for resources (though it builds legions of troops over and over), and it always attacks from the same spots. Despite the great unit variety, units aren't very well balanced. Good unit balance means every unit has a strategic purpose; in *GC*, once you've researched a high-end unit, there's no reason, besides cost, to use a lower-end unit. So, the "strategy" boils down to: Learn the A.I.'s predictable pattern, place turrets, research the heavy units, then pump them out to win the map. Yawn.

GC is an all-right RTS, but why settle for it when you can get a much better one on a PC?

Thierry Nguyen

★★½

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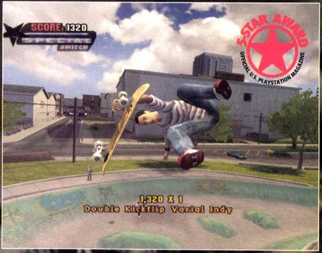
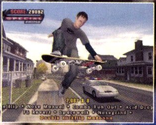
GAME OF THE MONTH


SCORE: 1320
SPECIAL
SWITCH
5-STAR AWARD
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
1,320 X 1
Double Kickflip Varial Indy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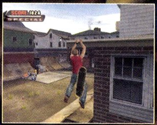
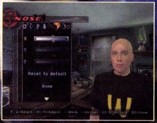
Nose Manual • Combo Run Out • Acid Drop
FS Revert • Spacewalk • Nosegrind •
Double Kickflip Madonna





SCORE: 0
SPECIAL

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Get into the game like never before

Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Neversoft **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Joy. Sadness. Friendship. Betrayal. Lust. Hatred. Sounds like a soap opera, doesn't it—or at the very least, an RPG? You'd expect this sort of thing in games starring either plucky young adventurers out to save the world, or vampires. You wouldn't expect it in an extreme-sports game.

You're in for a surprise. Oh, *Tony Hawk's Underground* isn't going to win any awards for writing, certainly. But for the first time I can remember, an extreme-sports game actually has a real story, honest-to-goodness characters, and a reason to play beyond seeing the next level or beating your last high score.

Of course, *THUG* has a whole hell of a lot more than that. No need to belabor the obvious here: lots of challenges, big and beautiful levels, crazy tricks, and stupid air. Yeah yeah yeah—it's what you expect from a *Tony Hawk* game. Happy?

Let's talk about what you *don't* expect from a *Tony Hawk* game. Like your starring role in it. Yes, the much-ballyhooed option of downloading your own face to a created skater is every bit as cool as you'd expect. No, of course, it's not photorealistic; remember that these are small textures stretched over a fairly simplistic model. But with a bit of tweaking of physical details, you can end up with something that will cause passers-by to stop and stare. "That's...*you*," they exclaim. (Then they usually get creeped out and run away.)

That's only the start, though. It's no surprise that *THUG* lets you build your own park—but the option to throw in full-sized buildings and just about everything else you see in the final game definitely exceeds expectations. And I'm sure you've heard about the expansive Create-a-Trick option, which adds yet another level of personality.

But all this goes on behind the scenes, so to speak. What about the game itself? Well, come on—it's *Tony Hawk*. You know the basic formula; just visualize *Tony 4*, with the ability to wander around on foot added in. It makes exploring the huge levels (always one of my favorite things in the series) especially rewarding. Plus, the ability to chain a brief footrace into a combo gives you the opportunity for some truly unique lines.

Two things struck me as unpleasant surprises: The first was that many of the challenges were simpler than I expected, allowing me to get through the game fairly quickly. And the second was that once I did get through the game, I felt less motivation to keep playing than I have in previous games; I guess that's the price you pay for having an actual plot.

Let me clarify: I felt less motivation to keep playing the *story mode*; let us not forget about the massively robust online options—including the ability to save and trade characters and parks online—in addition to actually going head-to-head in a variety of modes. And let's also not forget about all that messing around you can do under the hood. These features mean that your playtime is limited only by your imagination.

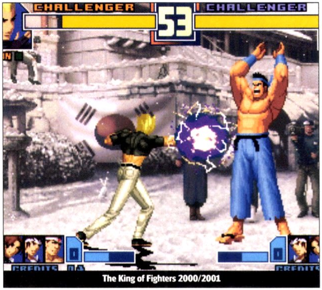
But to me, these aren't the biggest improvements. A skating game that lets me tinker with its innermost workings is big, sure. But a skating game that makes me want to beat it to find out how the story turns out? That's huge. And that's *THUG*.

Joe Rybicki

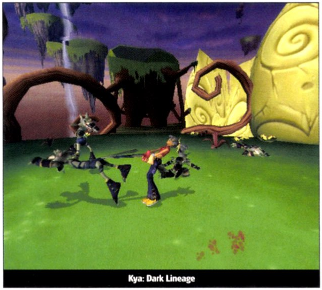
✪✪✪✪✪

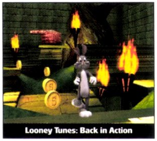
GONE AND BACK AGAIN
In 2001, SNK USA closed its doors...only to reopen them in 2003, as SNK Neo Geo USA.

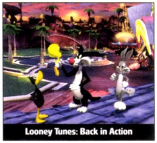
DRIVEN
Eden Games, the development studio responsible for Kya, had previously made nothing but racing games.



The King of Fighters 2000/2001


Kya: Dark Lineage


Looney Tunes: Back in Action


Looney Tunes: Back in Action

THE KING OF FIGHTERS 2000/2001

Publisher: SNK Neo Geo USA
Developer: SNK
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

As 2D fighting atrophies from a worldwide obsession into a tiny, insular cult, it's arguable that there's no cult more dedicated than the one that plays *King of Fighters*. Once the flagship of SNK's Neo Geo arcade hardware, the series made team-based fighting a standard in the genre. It's now followed by a comparatively few die-hard fans who wait each year for a new offering.

While they wait for *KOF2003* to hit arcades, Stateside cultists will appreciate SNK's return effort as an American publisher—a collection of two *KOF* tournaments, *King of Fighters 2000* and *King of Fighters 2001*. These are, after all, the first *KOF*s released for home consoles in more than two years. It's not a perfect package, but two games for $40 is a pretty nice deal.

CHALLENGER
36
CHALLENGER
The King of Fighters 2000/2001

CHALLENGER
26
CHALLENGER
The King of Fighters 2000/2001

Like all home conversions of 2D fighters, these ports lose something in translation. Some animations aren't perfect, and you lose the clarity of an arcade monitor, since the Neo's resolution doesn't properly correspond to a TV display's. These are still good ports, as such things go, though—watch the supersmooth animation of Zero's cape at the end of *2000*.

2001 has undergone other changes, including the addition of new filtered backgrounds to replace the old pixelly Neo Geo bitmaps. You may have seen screenshots that looked quite ghastly; the real thing isn't that bad, and it looks very sharp in motion, but purists may object nonetheless. There's an option to pick the original backgrounds, so feel free to decide for yourself.

The bigger problem is that *2000* and *2001* aren't the best games in the series. Most fans would rank them at the low end of the scale with the nascent '*94* and the twitchy '*96*. *2000* was SNK's last game, and it feels rushed and incomplete—it's short on the details that give '*97* and '*98* so much replay value. *2001* has better presentation but suffers from ill-tuned gameplay. It was Playmore's first *KOF*, and while its work improved in *2002*, that initial effort is a bit hit-or-miss.

These are good enough games, though, and the package is inexpensive enough to make it a worthwhile purchase for die-hard *KOF* fans. Novices will like it, too—it's a pretty cheap and comprehensive introduction to the series. Give it a go, and maybe you'll find yourself joining the cult.

David Smith

★★½

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

Publisher: Atari
Developer: Eden Games
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Behold the wind—the dullest of all the elements!

Mother Earth brings life to all. Mighty fire devastates everything in its wake. Gentle water purifies and refreshes. But the wind? Well, it's just kind of annoying.

A fitting choice, then, to feature wind as a the most "innovative" aspect of *Kya*'s gameplay. Our titular hero can freefall from dizzying heights, negotiating her way through hazardous pathways as she plummets toward the ground.

To be fair, it's pretty neat at first. But it soon wears thin, becoming just another gameplay gimmick that doesn't do much to salvage an otherwise mediocre effort. In other words, *Kya* is about as exciting as the wind.

The biggest problem? *Dark Lineage* aspires to be so much more than it actually is. With its massive world, sprawling levels, and abundance of story, *Kya* wants to be counted among the *Ratchets* and *Jaks* of this generation. But its aspirations are mere delusions of grandeur; they only highlight how much more polished those top-tier titles are in comparison. When a game misses the mark on just about everything—even if it's only a smidge away—it's hard to have much fun playing it.

Take the control. Kya has a wide range of fighting moves that should spell fun, but...well, they don't. Combat tends to degenerate into desperate button mashing, with Kya getting locked into unintended combo sequences far too often—and once a fighting animation starts, you're stuck with that janky move set. As for the platformy bits, control is slightly unresponsive—not horribly so, but enough that you'll notice. What's more, the sticky camera can turn the easiest task into a tedious chore.

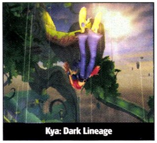
The story is no prize, either. I've never been one to bash a platformer for a lame narrative (even the best of them are somewhat silly), but *Kya*'s tale is so tedious and absurd that it'll irk even the most tolerant gamer.

The level design also leaves a lot to be desired. The large areas are confusing for no good reason. The objectives are often unclear. The hub system is extremely awkward. Heck, even your home town is a pain to get around.

Bottom line: Despite some gorgeous visuals and intriguing gameplay elements, *Kya* simply isn't any fun. And just like the wind, that really blows.

Gary Steinman

★★½


Kya: Dark Lineage

Kya: Dark Lineage

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Publisher: EA Games
Developer: Warthog
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

There's simply no excuse for this.

We don't expect much from a licensed game. And we especially don't expect much from a licensed platformer based on an animated movie. But c'mon! This is just mean! Think about the unsuspecting child who gets this as a gift from dear old Auntie Maude. *Think about the children, dammit!*

IF YOU LIKE LOONEY TUNES...

Try Taz: Wanted
"Taz, the character, is all about wanton destruction; same goes for *Taz*, the game, which rewards you for indiscriminately laying waste to the levels."
★★★½

Almost nothing about this game has any redeeming value. The levels are dull and repetitive. The control is whack. The gameplay is busted. It's boring. It's dopey. It's a betrayal of the trust we all put into our gaming companies.

Back in Action is so uninspired that I can't even come up with something funny yet dismissive to say about it. I just want this review to finish already. But like the game, this review will continue on without enough shame to end itself.

So, here's some more useless info to fill the allotted space: Did you know that Bugs received his first Oscar nomination in 1940 for *A Wild Hare*? His next came in 1942 for *Hiawatha's Rabbit Hunt*, and he finally won the statue in 1958 for *Knighty-Knight Bugs*. Oh, yeah—and this game stinks.

Gary Steinman

★

BLOOD-SUCKING COWBOY
Silicon Knights, original designers of the first *Legacy of Kain*, modeled Kain after Clint Eastwood's character in *Unforgiven*.

LEGACY OF KAIN DEFIANCE

Insert sucking joke here

Publisher: Eidos **Developer:** Crystal Dynamics **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature

Legacy of Kain: Defiance has an intricate, interesting story. It's got top-quality voice talent to deliver that story. It sports excellent graphics, superlative animation, and interesting character design. It features spectacular architecture, a detailed backstory, and a grandly arching plot that assumes the player is intelligent enough not to need everything spelled out in excruciating detail. It has a few puzzles, some nifty combat features, and loads and loads of atmosphere.

And it's a terrible, *terrible* game.

"How can this be?" you ask. "Don't all these elements *make* a good game?"

Well, in many cases—perhaps most cases—yes, they do. But in *Defiance*'s case, the actual gameplay is so appallingly unimaginative, so awfully monotonous that by the end of it, I was wondering why they even bothered making a game out of it.

Being able to play as both Kain and Raziel is a welcome—and sensible—evolution of the series. It's neat to see similar events from two different perspectives, and having many of the existential loose ends of the previous games tied up a bit is certainly welcome. The story assumes you have played the previous games and are able to pick up references to events and characters that happened as long ago as the original *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain*.

So why, why, oh Lord, *why* doesn't the gameplay make the same assumption? Why in holy hell is Raziel forced to upgrade his spectral Soul Reaver at six different elemental forges *again*? Why does Kain have to collect little tokens to power up his physical blade when it was so earth-shakingly powerful at the end of the *first* game? And where are all the stealth kills Kain picked up in *Blood Omen 2*?

These complaints, however, pale in comparison with the gameplay itself. Combat is simplistic (even with the acquired advanced attacks), consisting primarily of whacking on Square until the room is empty and the doors unlock. (Yeah, you're *forced* to fight through the brilliant design element of magical locking doors. Whee!) And there's a *lot* of combat. Seems like the designers figured the people who complained about the sparse combat in the previous *Soul Reaver* titles would appreciate fighting the same enemies over and over and *over* until it starts to get ridiculous, almost comical. Well, I don't appreciate it, and I'm guessing most other players won't, either.

Most appalling is the fact that all those Spirit Forges I mentioned are all basically the same. There are six total, and they incorporate a good half of the game—maybe more. You visit each one as Raziel, and you visit most (maybe all; I lost count) as Kain. So, yes, you're spending at least half the game's 15-ish hours trying to figure out how to get out of 12 levels that look and play almost identically to each other; it's as if the artists just swapped the colors and made minor tweaks to the areas. Does this seem *wrong* to anyone else, or is it just me?

Still, the story *is* somewhat interesting. Sure, it rehashes many of the themes, characters, locations, and plot points from the previous games. But the final act is a bit unexpected, and it's worth slogging through all that combat if you're dying to learn how things ultimately turn out.

If it weren't for the story in that last, say, 10 percent of the game, though, I probably would have scored *Defiance* a full point lower. Translation: This is for serious fans of the series *only*.

Joe Rybicki

★★½

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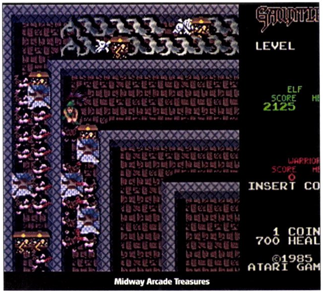
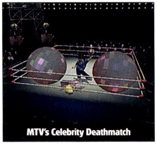
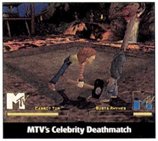
THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE
The California Raisins represent claymation at its finest.



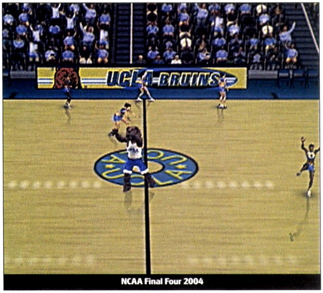
Midway Arcade Treasures



MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch



MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch



NCAA Final Four 2004

MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES

Publisher: Midway. Duh.
Developer: Digital Eclipse
MSRP: $19.99 **ESRB:** Teen

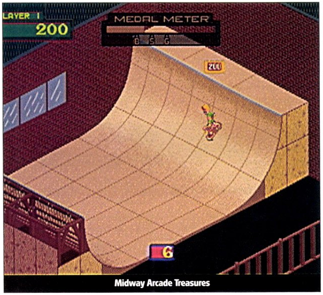
At last, at last: an arcade-perfect *720* with analog support. An arcade-perfect, four-player *Gauntlet* with accurate sound effects—including that hauntingly familiar voice synthesis. An arcade-perfect *Spy Hunter*, and *Joust*, and *Defender*, and *Smash TV*, and *Marble Madness*. The lineup of *Arcade Treasures* really does draw on some of the true greats of the company's history. And, unlike any arcade compilation released on PS1, these games are *exactly* like their standup counterparts.

So, there's a lot of juicy gameplay to be had here. There are some extras, too, but these are pretty disappointing: Unlike the brilliance of *Activision Anthology*, what's here consists mainly of shaky, amateur interviews with game designers, a few scanned manuals and sell sheets, and even fewer "history" pieces you can read through if you have the patience. (To be fair, the history pieces are as long as they are because they're so in-depth.)

But ultimately, a whole lot of you just won't care either way. Basically, if you're not a child of the '80s, don't even bother. Those of us who wore wide fluorescent laces in our Adidas hi-tops, who listened to music that would have sounded absolutely *grody* without a key-tar, who spent Saturday mornings in front of the TV eating Sugar Smacks and watching *Land of the Lost*—we'll fall all over ourselves to play *Arcade Treasures*. And you young'uns who think arcades have always had *Tekken* machines can just smile and nod and walk on by.

Joe Rybicki

★★★½



Midway Arcade Treasures

MTV'S CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

Publisher: Gotham Games
Developer: Big Ape Productions
MSRP: $19.99 **ESRB:** Mature

Remember when claymation was cool? Wait, claymation was never cool, and neither was the consistently lame T.V. show called *MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch*, which featured clay versions of popular celebrities beating each other senseless. So, as you might suspect, the videogame adaptation of *Celebrity Deathmatch* isn't all that hot, either. Unless you think a combination of rudimentary fighting mechanics and lowbrow humor—humor that was *almost* funny three years ago—makes for a great game.

Each of the celebrities is equipped with standard punches, kicks, grappling moves, and other sorts of celebrity-specific attacks that attempt to be funny but are actually quite stupid. Occasionally, some weapons drop into the ring, but they're pretty worthless, especially since it's just as easy to maul every opponent with a single attack. At some point during the match, you can rip off the limbs of your opponents, turning them into bloody stumps, but it makes the game only that much easier.

There really isn't much else to the game. The episode option takes you through a series of fights to unlock new characters, but it takes only about 30 minutes to complete. The create-a-fighter mode is fairly lean and doesn't really allow for potentially interesting character ideas. It's neither fun nor funny—you're better off spending $20 on something else.

Giancarlo Varanini

★½

NCAA FINAL FOUR 2004

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: 989 Sports
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

In any of its numerous forms, basketball is a fast-paced sport that requires quick reflexes and precise movement on both offense and defense. But apparently, some of these observations have been completely lost on the developers of *NCAA Final Four*, since the game's sluggish controls aren't the most conducive for college basketball action.

Simple things, like passing the ball to a teammate five feet away from the ball handler, take too much time and negate the need for teamwork. Passing accuracy is also a major problem. The default in-bound pass (or passing the ball without indicating a certain direction) is often to a man at the other end of the court instead of to the point guard standing right in front of the ball handler. Likewise, getting the ball to a man trying to post up is much more difficult than it should be if there's another teammate in the immediate area. Icon passing alleviates a few of these problems, but it's simply not as fast as the default passing scheme should be.

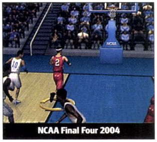
Beyond that, *NCAA Final Four* basically turns into a one-on-one dunkfest. The poor A.I. makes it surprisingly simple to use a few dribble moves to blow by a defender and make your way to the hoop for an easy dunk. Even on the hardest difficulty setting, a good point guard can almost always get into the paint for a jumpshot. You might as well not bother with any other aspect of the offensive game, such as posting up, since it's not as effective as just being a ball hog.

The dynasty mode lets you take control of a program from different coaching positions, which is interesting, but the difference in coaching levels isn't more than an option to make recruiting either automatic or manual. The separate career mode offers a slightly more intriguing experience since you're not only watching out for the program, but also your career as a coach. And then there's the online mode, which has the same interesting features of its 989 counterparts, like cross-game voice chat and real-time sports score tickers.

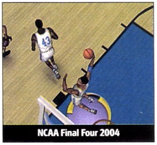
But really none of this makes *NCAA Final Four* a worthwhile purchase. There are just far too many problems with its basic mechanics; you'd be better off taking a look at any of the other college basketball games available this year.

Giancarlo Varanini

★★



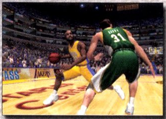
NCAA Final Four 2004

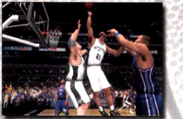


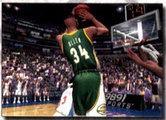
NCAA Final Four 2004

NBA SHOOTOUT 2004

Bring home the NBA.







NBA ShootOut™ 2004 puts you in the paint with the pros. Go online and track your progress versus all the other ballers in the country with a real-time sports ticker, 64-man tournaments and in-depth career reporting. Use the USB headset (for PlayStation® 2) to execute more than 40 new voice-recognition commands. Call plays, time-outs, screens, picks and double-teams, and to talk up your game with the new online chat feature. Prove that you've got enough game, and a seat on the bus could be yours.

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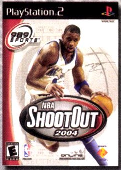

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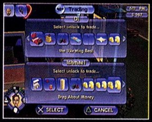
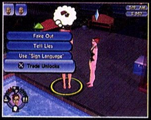
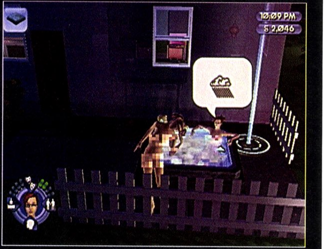
BEHIND THE SIMS
See that yellow jumpsuit? That's the same one Uma Thurman and Bruce Lee wore in their respective movies (*Kill Bill* and *Game Of Death*).







THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT

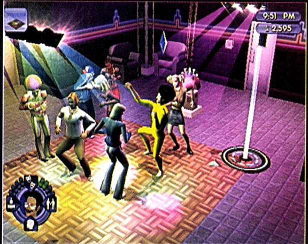
The surreal life

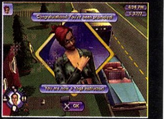
Publisher: EA Games
Developer: Maxis
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

If anything, *The Sims: Bustin' Out* is a catalyst for eliciting interesting comments, ranging from the surprising, "Man alive, I gotta get me some matching curtains for the solarium!" to the immature, "Dude, there's three hot naked chicks in the hot tub!!" Whether embracing one's inner interior designer or one's inner *Porky's*, players of all types have something to enjoy in *Bustin' Out*.

Like its predecessor, there's a sandbox mode, a structured campaign mode, and a cooperative mode for said campaign. Along with subtle tweaks to the previous game (such as the option to now toggle Accelerated Time via R1, rather than being forced to hold it down), *Bustin' Out* adds a major component to the previous game: the ability to leave your house. In fact, these locations aren't just places to visit and gawk at; they are also places you can move into.

The fact that your Sim can leave the house and move into another locale is a huge gameplay change. Not only are they basically prefurnished homes with additional knickknacks, they also have their own set of unique goals, unlockable objects, and characters (the potential roommate pool is quite large). OK, it's a little surreal to admit that you're now living at the gym/art gallery/night club, but once you get over that particular piece of absurdity, these places also add replayability. Previously, switching jobs was a simple matter of reading the paper. In *Bustin' Out*, jobs require you to live in specific places. So you have the additional challenge of adapting to your new place, fulfilling its specific objectives (such as "recruit more members for the gym"), and getting ahead in your career. When worse comes to worst, you can always move back in with Mom and easily recuperate skills and motives at home.



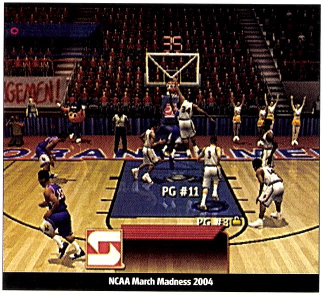

Congratulations! You've been promoted!
You are now a Yoga Instructor
OK

Rounding out the overall package is the online component. Finally addressing the much-requested option for "weekends," *Bustin' Out* lets you take your Sim online in order to trade or unlock items and work on your skills. Honestly, I was able to fiddle around with only two characters in two different career tracks, so it was nice to go online and find someone else to trade stuff with. Since your motives, skills, and objects carry over between online and offline play, I was able to visit players' houses that had skill-building machines, socialize with other Sims, and return to the offline mode with extra loot, more skills, and a great mood.

Bustin' Out is pretty much the perfect sequel—it corrects some of the previous game's weaknesses, adds cool new features, and still maintains the core vision and playability of the last game. It might not be as novel as the previous game, but it supplies more of what was so good in the first game. For the legions of *Simmers*, this is the best surreal life you'll live on your PS2.

Thierry Nguyen

✪✪✪✪½



NCAA March Madness 2004

NCAA MARCH MADNESS 2004

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

To say that some people are really passionate about college basketball is an understatement. After all, this is the same sport in which two mascots were provoked into a heated fistfight. (And it's the only sport that my high school teachers let us watch during the middle of class in the spring.) While you won't find a sweater-clad bear slamming his fist into a scary-looking tree's stomach in *March Madness*, the game does capture key characteristics of college basketball, some of which make it a blast to play.

Any basketball game can throw a zone defense at you, but during *March Madness*, you rarely feel like you're actually playing against a *college* zone D. The most important facet of college basketball that the game gets right is the way you have to break down the defense. Playing 1-on-1 basketball doesn't help, since beating a man on the perimeter usually just results in two other players swarming over to your position. But this is good because it forces you to use your teammates and rapidly pass the ball around the court to create an open shot.

In that sense, *March Madness* also captures the chaotic nature of college basketball. And it punishes you for being careless—as often as possible, defenders will stick their hands out to knock the ball down. All of this, particularly during the first few minutes of play, will undoubtedly prove frustrating for even the most hardcore basketball fan.

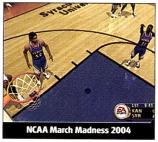
As for the rest of the game, you'll find many of the same features from *NBA Live 2004*. The excellent freestyle control remains intact, though the number of fancy moves seems to have been reduced slightly to reinforce the importance of the passing game. The two separate shot buttons are present and equally effective as they were in *Live*. The Ask-the-Coaches option—through which one of several coaches gives a brief presentation on how to play—is a small addition, but it's one of the few things that enhances the college atmosphere.

The sound is worth mentioning for the same reason. If you have a good sound setup, you should crank it up and absorb the awesome chants and sounds of the arena. Of course, if you aren't a fan of longtime college commentator Dick Vitale and his incredibly obnoxious voice, then you might want to reconsider.

Giancarlo Varanini

✪✪✪✪

NCAA March Madness 2004



NCAA March Madness 2004

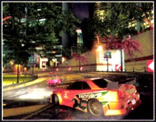
NEED FOR SPEED
UNDERGROUND

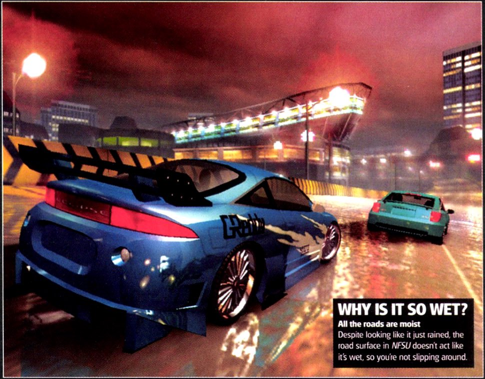
The fastest and best-looking racing game ever

Publisher: EA Games **Developer:** EA Black Box **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

www.importtuner.com
Cars, girls, and everything you need to know about the scene. It's featured in the game too.

www.undergroundstyle.org
Hit this site for cool *Need For Speed Underground* wallpapers, info, and more.





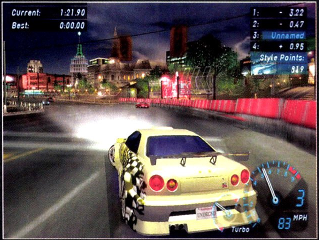
WHY IS IT SO WET?

All the roads are moist

Despite looking like it just rained, the road surface in *NFSU* doesn't act like it's wet, so you're not slipping around.

Despite the popularity of the import tuning scene and the underground racing culture associated with it, there haven't been many games that acknowledge this style of racing. Rich with attitude and cool gizmos, it's the perfect playground for videogames, and EA has done a magnificent job bringing the spectacle to PS2.

Let's get the most obvious comment about the game out of the way first. It's gorgeous. Without a shadow of a doubt, it's the best-looking game on the system—it's a case study in how to portray the speed and ferocity of racing. After playing *NFSU*, all other racing games seem slow. Only *Midnight Club 2* can keep up when it comes to thrills, but even it doesn't show the same kind of style seen in *NFSU*. Light effects blur, the camera wobbles, neon reflects on the road surface, and the cars look spectacular. It's genuinely jaw dropping, and it will stop you in your tracks the first time you see it moving at full tilt. The screenshots here just don't do it justice.



The meat of the game is the career mode that has you hitting the underground scene and establishing a reputation as a bad-boy racer. You start off in a stock three-box and trundle around until you've won some cash and respect and can start to mod your car. The cool thing for most of us is that the car you drive in real life is probably featured, so you can indulge in a little "what if?" fantasy as you start to add body kits, cool rims, vinyl, and engine mods. As is the norm in modern racing games, you're not simply repeating variations of the same race over and over; instead, you must master a number of styles. In addition to the basic race, there are time trials, drag races, and my least favorite, drift races, where you accumulate points for sliding sideways. Drag races in particular are spectacular, and while driving in a straight line and changing gears at the right time may sound boring, it's actually incredibly exciting. I love the fact that Black Box changed this mode's control scheme: You don't "steer," you simply switch lanes to avoid traffic. Drag races last no longer than about 30 seconds, but they're amazingly intense.

ONLINE, TOO!

Like pretty much all of EA's games coming out this holiday season, you can play *NFSU* online, and it's awesome. Up to four people can play together, and if you have a group of like-minded gearhead buddies, this is the mode you'll find yourself using most of the time.

Movement through the career mode requires you to win every race you enter, and there are 112 events (some containing several individual races) to win if you're going to beat the game. It took me about a week to open everything up and win that last race, and I was making a pretty concerted effort. To be completely honest, I think it's maybe a bit *too* much, and things start to get really tough around event 50.

As you mod your car, you take it through three basic levels of craziness. Upgrades in level one make it just a little bit tasty; in level three, the weight of your car has been seriously reduced, and you're running on 17-inch rims and blowing a crazy turbocharger. Modding is actually presented in a much more complicated way than is necessary. While numerous aftermarket parts suppliers are featured in the game, it doesn't matter which particular brand you choose. Sparco or HKS? Enkei or OZ? It's sadly of no consequence; it's more about level three being better than level two in the end, and that's a bit disappointing, really. Similarly, your choice of car turns out to be no more than an aesthetic choice. As soon as you're running a bunch of crazy mods, a tricked-out Lancer is as effective as a tricked out 350Z.

Why doesn't *NFSU* get a five out of five? Well, mainly because I got a bit tired of the career mode toward the end. The feeling of being rewarded for my efforts kinda dried up, and the only reason I beat the game was because, well, I was nearly there. It would have been stupid to give up then, wouldn't it?

John Davison

★★★★½

Spawn Armageddon

SPAWN ARMAGEDDON

Publisher: Namco
Developer: Point Of View
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature

Even though Spawn looks kinda cool, the series has hit the bottom of the barrel several times: John Leguizamo as Clown, the story in which Spawn hangs out with Houdini (issues #19 and 20), and the Dreamcast game are but a few examples. *Spawn Armageddon* is yet another low point.

SA goes from merely mediocre to appallingly bad. Think of it as *Devil May Cape*, now with extra jumping and idiocy. Oh, and add generic powers like "slow down time" and "release enemy-seeking green glob." Spawn uses his guns and powers to navigate horrid levels populated by enemies that resemble the doodles of a 10-year-old who thinks he's *totally hardcore*.

Even the boss battles are uninspired. When fighting Violator (he's the first boss!), you merely have to run around and hit him with everything you've got. The same tactic applies even for the Redeemer, a level 16 boss. Whatever.

After that, the levels go from merely boring to either broken or just plain stupid. At one point, a level begins in yet another ominous alleyway with a big pile of rubble in front of you. Walk over the rubble and the load screen greets you. Uh, whomever designed a level in which you hit a load screen after three footsteps with no action should just be kicked. Or there's the wonderfully imaginative level design known as the "barely decorated room with respawning enemies." How about the mission in Central Park, where giant fireballs targeted at you come streaming out of the sky while you fight enemies that require you to stand still? Or the opera house level, where it takes monsters a full three minutes to figure out how to get off the stage and into the seating area where you are?

There are a few things to enjoy in *SA*. I kinda liked being able to tear enemies in half with Spawn's chains. The "bulidozer" boss was pretty silly, and the fact that the font the game uses makes "Brute" look more like "Bruce" got some chuckles out of me. Otherwise, it's nearly painful to play.

When I was a young lad reading *Spawn* back in the day, I wisely stopped following the comic when that stupid cybernetic gorilla, Cy-Gor, made an appearance, as the series just went downhill from there. I wish I had done the same when Cy-Gor appeared in this game.

Thierry Nguyen

★½

Spawn Armageddon

Spawn Armageddon

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00.00.00

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58 M

SPYHUNTER 2

Aren't sequels supposed to be better?

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Angel Studios
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

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115 M

In 2001, *SpyHunter* bucked the status quo set by remakes such as *Frogger*, *Galaga*, and *Breakout* when it proved that reinvented '80s classics don't have to suck. It's unfortunate that, now that *SpyHunter* is an established franchise for the 21st century, a shoddy sequel comes along to tarnish the name.

OK, so maybe that's a little harsh. *SpyHunter 2* isn't an entire mess. You have to *really* screw up to make a mess of such a solid premise. But the game *is* a big, fat disappointment.

You know the basics: As the spy hunter (some dude named Alec...who really cares?), you drive around in the armed-to-the-teeth G-8155 Interceptor, blasting away at the NOSTRA terrorist organization. It makes for a lot of fast-paced, constantly moving action that keeps you immersed the whole time.

Oh, wait. That was the last one. In *SpyHunter 2*, you *are* driving and blasting at high speeds most of the time—and it's usually fun enough. But one of the best strategies to surviving is to slow down and hang back so that you don't approach the enemy vehicles too quickly. Breakneck speed—not being methodical—made the last one a blast.

Even when you do take things slowly and strategically, frustration—even hopelessness—sets in when a level with a 5-minute time limit takes more than two hours to complete. I don't actually hate *SpyHunter 2*, but I did yell out a vehement "I *hate* this game!" on several occasions. Stages like Meeting of the Minds simply throw too much firepower your way and require an equal amount of luck and skill to pass through. You can't switch to Easy mode, either—but then again, quite a few of the levels need a Hard setting. Difficulty remains inconsistent throughout.

When I look back at this game, the nearly impossible parts will be what sticks in my mind. Maybe if something, I dunno, *memorable* occurred in the levels, something that didn't have me throwing my controller, it'd be a different story. But alas, you won't find situations like an incidental Monaco Grand Prix race here.

SpyHunter 2 simply lacks any soul. So what if there's a new, sexy female agent assisting me? I don't even see her when I'm supposedly rescuing her—why should I even care? (If you thought the last game's story presentation sucked....) So what if my transforming vehicle can now go off-road by changing its tires? The feature does nothing to enhance gameplay. And boss fights? If you're still playing after the most heavily armed train in world history destroys you for the 71st time, you probably have nothing else in your library worth trying. Oh, and I almost neglected to mention the new shoot-from-the-weapons-van feature—an easy thing to forget, since you can count the number of minutes you utilize it on one hand.

Angel's new game engine does feature some great control and a better-looking Interceptor, but *SpyHunter 2* as a whole looks unappealingly washed out.

What happened, Midway? Give us a much-improved *SpyHunter 3*, or don't give us one at all.

Chris Baker

★★★

GINA CAVALLI
Buxom and sassy, Gina is your main rival—but secretly, we think she really likes you.

RENA HAYAMI
This is you. You're new to the racing scene, and it takes you a while build a reputation.

R: RACING EVOLUTION

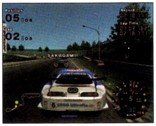
An opportunity to use our favorite term, "CarPG"

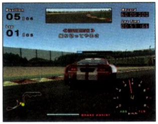
Publisher: Namco **Developer:** Namco **MSRP:** $4999 **ESRB:** Everyone

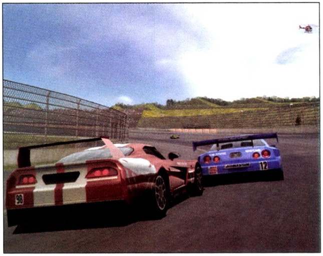
If you really like Codemasters' *Pro Race Driver*, there's a pretty good chance you'll slip into *R*'s groove pretty quickly. Apart from *R* featuring a hot chick instead of a whiny, grumpy dude, the experiences are quite similar. The notion of a story-driven racing game is definitely something I'm getting used to, and after an initial feeling of resistance, I have to say the game got to be quite fun.

After being discovered as a wild and crazy ambulance driver by a dude who looks like a young Heihachi, you find yourself as the new mascot of a race team—and at the heart of some corporate intrigue and interpersonal rivalry. The tension between the two chicks that Namco has been showing images of for the past six months rears itself early in the game, and you're actively chasing after your rival as soon as you start a race.

There's a lot to like about *R*. It has 11 track types and features eight completely different styles of racing, including rally, GT, and the ubiquitous drag. In trying to be all things to all people, I was expecting it to falter in some areas, but it's perfectly competent throughout. The rally modes have a distinctly *Sega Rally* air to them, and all the other modes look good and feature very believable driver A.I., so you don't feel like you're racing against robots.







My biggest complaint is, like with so many racers these days, it just doesn't feel fast enough. When you're running a Touring Car spec S2000 on the Suzuka course, you should really be able to tell that it accelerates like a bullet and flies like the wind. There's a sluggishness throughout that isn't helped by the sound effects. Engine noises sound good, but when you're popping gears at the red line, you never get the feeling of being on the edge. In terms of visceral driving experiences, *R* couldn't be much more different from *Need For Speed*. It's terribly sedate and almost too forgiving in its physics. You can hit a corner like a bat out of hell and pretty much get things under control without losing your grip. At times, it's like the tires are made out of glue. Given the choice, I'll take sticky over *Ridge Racer*–style slippy-slidey, but I wouldn't mind a bit more oversteer to make things exciting, especially in some of the rear-drive monsters available.

Namco makes a big deal about the game's in-race communications, and at first, I wasn't sure why. All games have a bit of radio chatter for flavor, don't they? *R*'s is constant. At first you think, "Yeah, OK, thanks," but after a while it's actually kinda cool to have the guy in the pits tell you that you just took that last corner like a pro. It's not a major factor in the grand scheme of things, but it's a nice bit of flavor that will especially thrill nongamer types. "It's like it's watching everything you do," was one comment I overheard a nongamer make.

It's not the greatest racer ever made, but it is pretty darn good. If you're waiting for *GT4* and the grit of *NFSU* doesn't appeal to you, it's certainly worth your time. There's a lot of content to play through, so it will certainly keep you occupied for a while should you want it to.

John Davison

★★★★

CORVETTE
ACDelco
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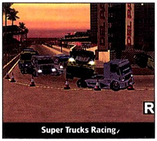
63
NAVY
GOODYEAR

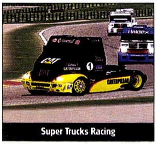


Super Trucks Racing

Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3

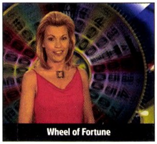
Virtual On Marz

Wheel of Fortune



Super Trucks Racing

Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3



Wheel of Fortune

SUPER TRUCKS RACING

Publisher: XS Games
Developer: Jester Interactive
MSRP: $14.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

The most interesting thing about *Super Trucks Racing* is that it's based on a real race series. The live-action intro proves it—there is, in fact, a championship in which people race souped-up tractor rigs on road courses and superspeedways. The video footage is frankly awesome, giving an impression of the spectacle that must be involved in such a ridiculous combination of speed and bulk.

The problem with the game, then, is that it makes racing a 1,300-horsepower truck against five other 1,300-horsepower trucks around tight and twisting road circuits seem like a downright sedate affair. It handles like a benign version of Codemasters' *TOCA Race Driver* series—slot yourself into the first-person view and it's all but impossible (if you're in the lead, anyway) to tell what sort of vehicle you're driving. There's no feeling of the weight or power of the real thing, and precious little sense of speed. The oval-track races may as well not even be there, for all the challenge they offer.

If this game had some quality to set it apart—more unique handling, more crushing crashes, and perhaps a healthy dose of Swedish death metal in place of the brutally bland Euro-pop soundtrack—it would live up to the beautifully bizarre promise of its source material. Unfortunately, there's no reason to play something like this when *Gran Turismo* and *TOCA Race Driver* present vastly more fleshed-out alternatives.

David Smith

★½

TOKYO XTREME RACER 3

Publisher: Crave
Developer: Genki
MSRP: $19.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

At this point, the *Tokyo Xtreme Racer* series has definitely worn out its welcome. This is the fourth game in the series, since there was a *Zero* between *2* and *3*, but you'd be hard pressed to tell it apart from any of its predecessors without a detailed examination. All the features added to Genki's long-running game of after-dark street racing are cursory at best and cosmetic at worst, leaving this a very doubtful purchase for any except the absolutely obsessed.

What, after all, is new here? There are more opponents to race, certainly, and more freeways on which to race them. But *Zero* already offered so many opponents that only a hardy few finished the game. There are new weather effects, which make racing in the wet more interesting, but they come at a pretty severe visual cost. Along with the raindrops on the camera and the shiny reflections on the street, you get awful background draw-in whenever it rains. And the addition of licensed cars makes no practical difference at all. The previous games already had authentic vehicles—this one just adds the proper badges and rules out the prospect of its publisher being sued into smithereens.

Ask yourself this question, then: After exploring every inch of freeway and beating all 400 opponents in *Zero*, did you find yourself wanting more of the same afterwards? If the answer is yes, plunk down the money for *TXR 3*. Then look for some psychiatric aid.

David Smith

★★

VIRTUAL ON MARZ

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Hitmaker
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** E

No. No. No. No! If someone had told me a few years ago that Sega wanted to develop *Virtual On* into a standard action game, as opposed to a fighting game, I would've laughed in their face. But here it is. The console-exclusive iteration of the arcade series tries to ditch its arcade roots by throwing in a lame story line, complete with dialogue that probably took all of five minutes to concoct. And that's not all. The wonderfully monochrome single-textured environments—much larger than those found in any of the arcade games—do nothing but exacerbate inherent weaknesses in *Virtual On's* gameplay mechanics, dulled here to accommodate newcomers.

What makes the *Virtual On* series so appealing to begin with are the tank-like controls that emphasize precise dashing and jumping movements. With the larger environments in *Marz*, those elements are almost completely lost, since it's generally easier to dodge enemy attacks, and there isn't as much strategic use of objects for taking cover. The smaller, more confined environments are poorly designed, accommodating only a nonsensical style of button-mashing combat.

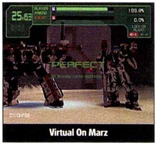
The overall speed makes the whole game even more disappointing. The pace has been slowed to attract a broader audience, but the end result is combat that's sluggish and boring. Even the quickest and most agile virtuaroid drags its feet in comparison to its arcade counterparts.

It's easy to think that a lot of these problems are caused by poor controls, but *Marz's* controls are actually decent. If you've ever played a *Virtual On* game with reasonable success on the Sega Saturn or Dreamcast, then you won't encounter too many problems here. For the arcade purists, a control scheme that uses two analog sticks is available, but it's not as useful or even as practical as the default control scheme.

The *Virtual On* series has always been admired by a relatively small group of people. But in its apparent attempt to compete with the likes of *Z.O.E. 2* and other high-speed giant-robot action games, Sega has alienated even the most die-hard *Virtual On* fan with a game that's merely a skeleton of its predecessors.

Giancarlo Varanini

★★



Virtual On Marz

Virtual On Marz

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Publisher: Atari
Developer: Artech
MSRP: $29.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Boy, Artech really crapped this one out. When a franchise—even if it *is* just a game-show license—makes the jump from one system to a more advanced one, you expect at least a little something different in the next generation. You don't get that in *Wheel of Fortune*. With the exception of some very slight aesthetic changes and a new slate of 3,200 puzzles, this is the exact same home version of *Wheel* that we saw on PS1. Even the six "exotic" settings (Disco, Great Outdoors, etc.) remain the same, but with a modest graphical enhancement.

Playing this game just makes me wanna ask questions. Why can't I see the other contestants? How does the wheel spin around without a hand reaching down to give it a whirl? Why do the A.I. players have to be so annoying? Why does it cut to a video clip of Vanna smiling uncomfortably at me to let me know it's my turn, yet we never see her turn letters? And why is *she* the host? Is Sajak *really* too damn busy these days to chip in with a videogame version of his show? And, perhaps the greatest question of all, why am I being so critical of freakin' *Wheel of Fortune*?!

If all you're after is solving puzzles and winning vacations you'll never go on, by all means, give this *Wheel* a spin. You might even find the career stats it keeps track of to be kind of cool (another PS1 idea ported over). Just don't be surprised if, once you start playing, you're questioning how a developer could cut so many corners .

Chris Baker

★★½

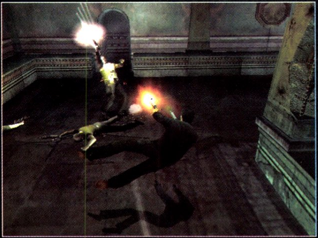
SCUM AND VILLAINY

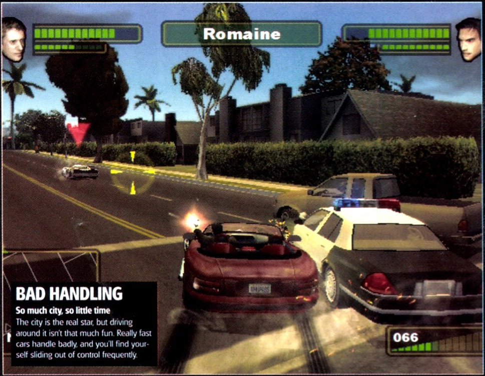
Michael Madsen (Lt. Donald Rafferty in *True Crime*) recently placed second in *Maxim's* list of Greatest Movie Villains of All Time for his role as Mr. Blonde in *Reservoir Dogs*.

TRUE CRIME
STREETS OF L.A.

Where did it all go wrong?

Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Luxoflux **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature





BAD HANDLING

So much city, so little time

The city is the real star, but driving around it isn't that much fun. Really fast cars handle badly, and you'll find yourself sliding out of control frequently.

I was under the impression that *True Crime* was supposed to be a gritty urban experience infused with a hip-hop sensibility. Early indications pointed to it being a *Grand Theft Auto* clone in which you play as a cop in a real city. Sure, it's a huge production with big-name voice actors, gorgeous graphics, and hours and hours of hip-hop music, but it is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a *GTA* clone.

If I had to sum up the game in one word, I'm not sure if I'd pick "boring" or "stupid." I guess it depends on what mood I'm in. The mission structure is desperately linear, despite pretending to offer a huge amount of freedom. The game has eight basic chapters, and, should you mess things up, you can choose to follow a branching pathway in the story.

It all starts out well enough. Christopher Walken does his schtick, apparently reading his lines off the back of his paycheck, but the production is pretty professional. The hero, Nick Kang (voiced by Russell Wong), is one of those smart-ass Hollywood cops that were popular in '80s movies. He's a loose cannon with a bad attitude and blah blah blah, seen it before, heard it too much, YAWN. The script is terrible, and the dialogue is so bad, it's embarrassing in places. Still, you could deal with that if the gameplay were good, huh?

Among the various types of gameplay, the most boring is the "drive from point A to point B" stuff. Often, this involves doing little more than driving in a straight line for a couple of minutes, presumably so you can admire the scenery. The game does offer the opportunity to "solve crimes" along the way, but it's not long before you get bored of shooting at bad guys in the street.

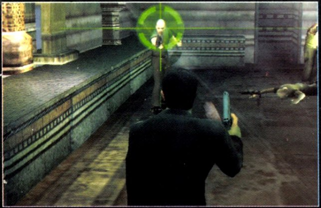
The on-foot stuff gets slightly more interesting, as there are three specific gameplay styles to try. Some missions have you stealthily sneaking into places (although these missions typically last less than a minute), while others have you strutting into a place with guns blazing, and still others have you fighting hand to hand. The shooting can be pretty fun, thanks to a fairly straightforward target lock, and the fighting-game stuff always looks spectacular, which slightly compensates for its button-mashing simplicity.

The overall experience starts off weak and deteriorates quickly. There's a fair amount of violence against women, which is disturbing, and this plunges to its lowest moral depths when you raid a strip club and beat up all the strippers. On the story front, things deteriorate even more when the story line wanders from its '80s-cop-movie theme into *Golden Child/Big Trouble in Little China* territory. Not only is the sudden switch jarring, but it also accompanies a dramatic downturn in the gameplay mechanics. After fighting through an underground maze full of zombies, you have to fight four floating demon skulls. Shoot the four skulls and they're replaced by...wait for it...*five* floating demon skulls.

This is a bad game. The fact that it was so ambitious just amplifies that fact. It's like a big-budget Hollywood flick gone horribly wrong—and just like those, you're better off renting it if you want to ogle the train wreck.

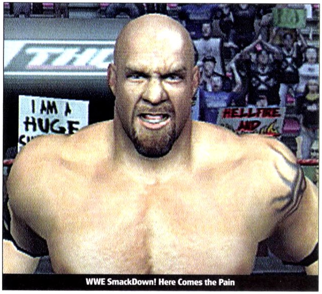
John Davison

★★



ODDLY FAMILIAR
Tad Williams' excellent *Otherland* sci-fi novels feature kids stricken by a strange disease while playing online games.

TAD WILLIAMS
OTHERLAND



WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain

WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES THE PAIN

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Yuke's
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Wrestling fans seem to have a love-it-or-hate-it relationship with the *SmackDown* series. Some appreciate its fast pace, while others scoff at the slightly unrealistic portrayal of professional wrestling. *Here Comes the Pain* is the first game in the series that tries to accommodate both sides by combining quick action with the technical elements of wrestling, and it works—almost.

All the quick punches and kicks from previous games have been retained, but the grappling system has undergone a few changes. Essentially, there are four different types of grapples, each dealing out a varying amount of damage. Within these four grapples, you can perform four different moves, so there's no shortage of moves to choose from, which will appease fans looking for a simulation type of game.

Each wrestler has four areas on which you can focus attacks. If you want to diminish an opponent's ability to walk, then you can use a variety of leg submissions and attacks. Conversely, if you focus attacks on the head, then the wrestler will become dazed after getting up from the ground.

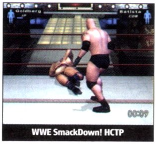
But the technical elements eventually fall apart and give way to arcade-style action. This is due in large part to the counter system, which dominates the gameplay. Since computer-controlled opponents constantly counter your moves, you must constantly use counters to have any hope of winning a match. Obviously, it requires some skill to execute counters successfully, but when it becomes the focal point of the wrestling, the game just isn't as fun.

However, the abundance of match types and modes will make it easy to overlook any shortcomings. There are several matches in which to participate, ranging from the crowd-pleasing bra-and-panties match to the ridiculous elimination chamber. You can also change the rosters for the two WWE shows and create your own wrestler with an incredibly robust create-a-wrestler mode. The branching season mode is also quite good.

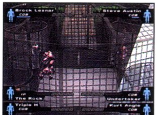
There's no question that *Here Comes the Pain* is the best wrestling game available, and Yuke's has made some nice improvements to the engine, but it certainly could've used a little more refinement.

Giancarlo Varanini

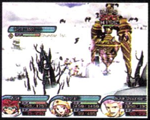
★★★½

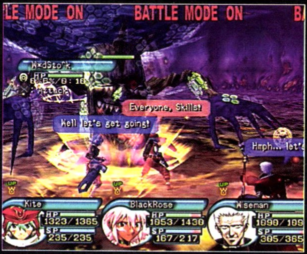


WWE SmackDown! HCTP



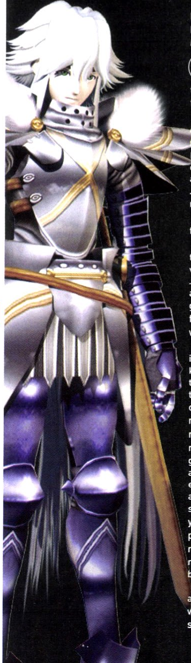
WWE SmackDown! HCTP





.hack//QUARANTINE

More of what you love...or hate



Publisher: Bandai
Developer: CyberConnect2
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Although I might be one of the biggest *.hack* supporters out there, I'll be the first to admit to having suffered from *.hack* fatigue.

I had enough. I already invested more than 80 hours in the first three chapters of this serialized RPG. I watched more than a dozen episodes of the *.hack//SIGN* anime series on DVD. I read the *.hack//Legend of the Twilight* manga from Tokyopop.

I was ready—no, *eager*—for it to finally end.

That feeling was short-lived, though. In fact, it lasted until the very second I started watching *.hack//LIMINALITY*, the separate anime DVD packed in with the game. From the moment that final chapter in the OVA began, I was hooked all over again.

And why not? Despite *.hack*'s inarguable flaws (it's repetitive, kinda ugly, and...er, *really* repetitive), the game remains one of the freshest concepts of this console generation. A massively multiplayer online RPG that's neither massively multiplayer nor online, *.hack* centers on a game-within-a-game and radiates out into a multimedia empire that includes television and print media. To fully understand the whole phenomenon, you have to consume the whole phenomenon—which means a major time and money investment for anyone who ends up becoming a fan.

Which makes this review a bit academic. By now, almost anyone with any passing interest in *.hack* should know where he stands. If you love the whole *.hack* experience, you'll continue to feel the same way. *QUARANTINE* does a great job of rounding out the story—although you might finish the game almost as confused as you were when you started. But if you got bored by an earlier chapter in the game, or if you think the *.hack* serialization and spin-offs amount to nothing more than a cheap marketing ploy aimed at milking you out of your hard-earned cash, then nothing in *QUARANTINE* will change your mind. It's really the same old game with tougher enemies and a few negligible extras tossed in. (Direct quote from bossman John D.: "Every time I see you playing this game, you're in the same pinkish dungeon with a flashing screen.")

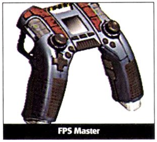
My advice to the few fence-sitters out there: Give it a shot—but understand what you're about to experience. The quality of *.hack* is similarly addictive to a typical MMORPG's—meaning it's more about accumulating better gear than it is about experiencing new and varied battles. Although there's plenty of strategy involved with combat, you'll find yourself in similar dungeons fighting similar enemies all too often. The primary joy comes from acquiring new and better stuff for you and your pals. And although the gameplay may be monotonous, nothing beats that feeling of success when you data-drain a tough foe to acquire a rare weapon or when you trade for a piece of armor that seemed so unattainable.

Gary Steinman

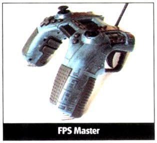
★★★★

KNOW YOUR GAMING HISTORY
Contrary to popular opinion, *Doom* wasn't the first first-person shooter; it was *Wolfenstein 3D*.

CAT BURGLAR
During the filming of *The Cat in the Hat*, an 8-foot-long pair of glasses was stolen from the set.



FPS Master



FPS Master

FPS MASTER

Manufacturer: Gamester
MSRP: $2999

This is undoubtedly one of the more bizarre-looking controllers on the market. Designed to look like the grips of two pistols welded together, it feels a lot more comfortable than it looks.

The L1 and R1 buttons are trigger-style (complete with trigger guards), which no doubt makes you wonder where the L2 and R2 buttons are. And that's one of the more interesting things about the controller: The bottom shoulder buttons are mounted on the *insides* of the grips, so you can easily hit them with the tips of your middle fingers. X and Triangle are mounted just below those, within easy reach of your ring fingers.

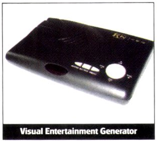
As you might imagine, this setup takes some getting used to (as does the positioning of the Square and Circle buttons *below* the right analog stick). The pad is fully programmable, which helps, but even so, there's still a steep learning curve.

The good news is that it's worth the effort. After extensive playtesting with *SOCOM*, I felt like I was quicker on the draw and more precise overall (I think this is partly due to the incredibly sensitive but still very solid analog sticks).

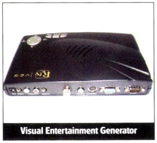
One major complaint: The D-pad is mounted below the left analog stick, presumably so that it's possible to tap it with the inside of your thumb. That just doesn't work for me, and it's really uncomfortable trying to get the tip of my thumb down there. Otherwise, it's a solid pad, so if your FPS fix doesn't require a lot of D-padding, give this weird-looking thing a try.

Joe Rybicki

★★★½



Visual Entertainment Generator



Visual Entertainment Generator

VISUAL ENTERTAINMENT GENERATOR

Manufacturer: Rtv
MSRP: $9999

So you want to play *SOCOM*, but your girlfriend is hogging the television, watching *Joe Millionaire* or something (hey, she's *your* girlfriend). Instead of fighting, then eventually giving in and watching that crap along with her (because you know, in the end, you will), why not try a more elegant solution?

Enter the Visual Entertainment Generator, a little box that turns any PC monitor (well, any PC monitor from the last 10 years or so) into a television. You can plug your PS2 into it. You can plug your cable into it. Heck, you can even plug a computer into it and switch between your PC and your game system on the fly, so you don't even need an *unused* PC monitor.

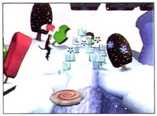
It's a neat idea, in part because your PC monitor's resolution is *much* higher than a standard television's. Algorithms in the VEG unit cast some crazy voodoo to increase the resolution of your games—I don't claim to understand it—and as long as your monitor is of a fairly standard size (say, 17 inches or smaller), it'll make your games look nice and sharp. (Images may actually look blurrier on larger monitors than they would on a television—that's the price you pay for convenience.)

Still, for $100...couldn't you just buy a real 19-inch color television from Wal-Mart? Because of that, the VEG strikes me as a product intended to fill a very narrow niche. It's undeniably well designed, but it just doesn't seem that useful for most folks.

Joe Rybicki

★★★½

PS2 Quick Hits

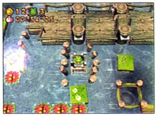


THE CAT IN THE HAT

Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: Magenta/Dreamworks
MSRP: $3999 **ESRB:** Everyone

Picture *Klonoa* with an annoying Mike Myers soundalike, much simpler gameplay, creepily digitized human characters (e.g., Alec Baldwin), and *really* surreal environments. Fun for kids, but you're better off playing *Klonoa*. **–J.R.**

★★

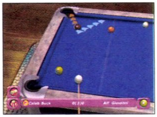


FROGGER'S ADVENTURES: THE RESCUE

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
MSRP: $2999 **ESRB:** Everyone

Once you get past the counterintuitive controls, *Rescue* serves as a completely serviceable hop-a-thon for tadpole gamers. It also boasts some of the lamest multiplayer minigames ever! **–C.B.**

★★½



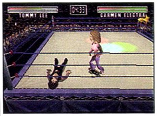
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004

Publisher: Jaleco
Developer: Blade Interactive Studios
MSRP: $3999 **ESRB:** Everyone

There's not much here to get your stick chalked-up about. It *may* capture your attention for about one game of 9-ball or doing some trick shots, but career mode will bore the balls out of you. **–J.B.**

★★

PS1 Quick Hits

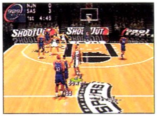


CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

Publisher: Gotham Games
Developer: Coresoft
MSRP: $999 **ESRB:** Teen

Yeah, it's only 10 bucks, but there are much better things you can get for the money—like a really big sandwich. Poor controls and a weak combat system make this game nearly unplayable. **–G.V.**

★

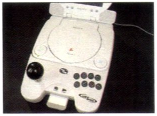


NBA SHOOTOUT 2004

Publisher: 989Sports
Developer: 989Sports
MSRP: $2999 **ESRB:** Everyone

Shootout looks absolutely horrible, and the gameplay mechanics are so ridiculously archaic that they make me cry when I play the game. Save yourself the trouble if you already own previous PS1 entries in the series. **–G.V.**

★



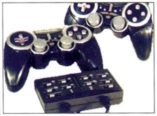
CONTROL ELEMENT

Manufacturer: Gemini/Game Elements
MSRP: $1299

Boasting a memory-card slot and a swappable D-pad and arcade stick, this snazzy number makes your PS1 with attached LCD screen an all-in-one unit. Tactile response is a bit sticky, and I have my doubts about its durability, but for $13, it's a must-have for PS1 owners. **–J.R.**

★★★★

PS2 Peripherals

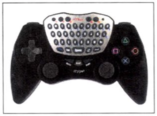


CLASHPADS

Manufacturer: Gamester
MSRP: $3499

This is a set of two controllers hooked into a unit that lets you periodically scramble, disable, or take over your opponent's controller. It's a neat idea, especially for fighting games...but it gets old pretty quick. Really, it's not much more than a novelty item. **–J.R.**

★★★

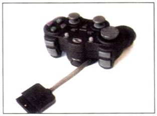


ITYPE2

Manufacturer: Nyko
MSRP: $4999

Ever wish you had a keyboard handy, just for online game chats? Here's your solution. The controller is comfortable enough for everyday use, and the keyboard works fine; the four macro buttons for oft-used phrases are especially nice. Just don't expect to touch-type. **–J.R.**

★★★★



RECOIL

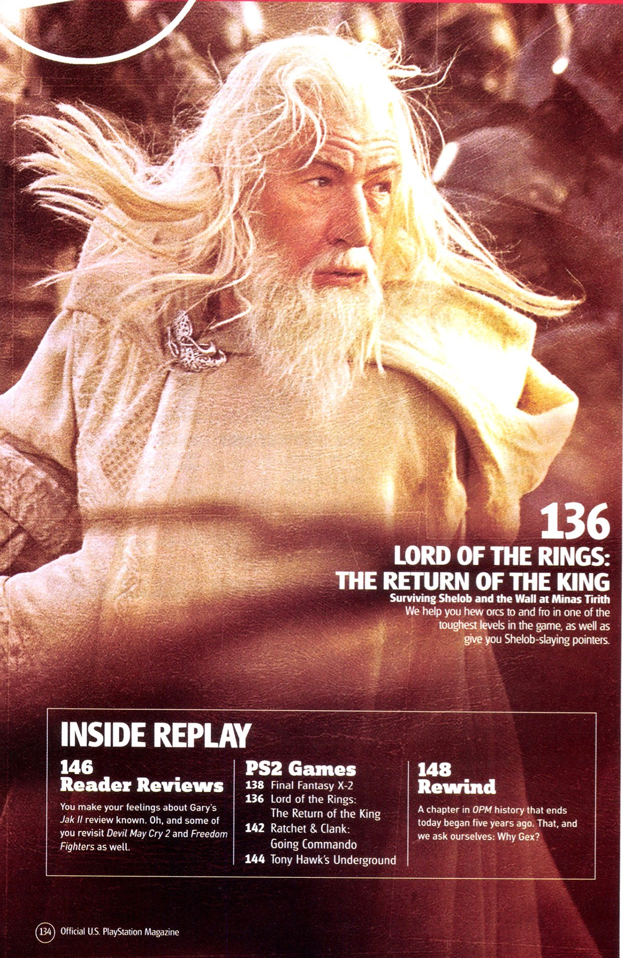
Manufacturer: Gemini/Game Elements
MSRP: $1999

It's a brilliant idea: a control pad with a retractable cord! It even has a solid feel and a very user-friendly layout. Too bad the unit I received *doesn't work*—both Down and Triangle are stuck! If you're a neat freak, it may be worth the gamble, but hold on to your receipt. **–J.R.**

★★½

REPLAY

Turning losers into winners.



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LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Surviving Shelob and the Wall at Minas Tirith

We help you hew orcs to and fro in one of the toughest levels in the game, as well as give you Shelob-slaying pointers.

INSIDE REPLAY

146 Reader Reviews

You make your feelings about Gary's *Jak II* review known. Oh, and some of you revisit *Devil May Cry 2* and *Freedom Fighters* as well.

PS2 Games

138 Final Fantasy X-2
136 Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King
142 Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando
144 Tony Hawk's Underground

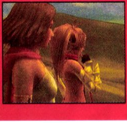
148 Rewind

A chapter in *OPM* history that ends today began five years ago. That, and we ask ourselves: Why Gex?

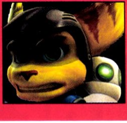
PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in green indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a five-star score. A number ❶ indicates its rank in the top-selling games for each system. ⚡ indicates game supports online play.

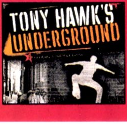
GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	★★★½	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	★★★★	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	★★★★	73
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	★★★★	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	★★★★	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	★★★★	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	★★★★½	**51**
Activision Anthology	Activision	★★★★	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	★★★	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	★★★½	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	★★★★½	59
Airblade	Namco	★★★★	53
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	★★★½	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	★★★½	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	★★★½	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	★★★	67
Alter Echo	THQ	★★	73
⚡ Amplitude	Sony CEA	★★★★	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	★½	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	★★★★½	70
Aqua Aqua	3DO	★★	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	★★★★	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	★	50
Armored Core 2	Agetec	★★★	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	★★★½	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	★★★½	61
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	★★★½	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	★★	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	★★★★	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	★★½	45
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**42**
⚡ ATV Offroad Fury 2	Sony CEA	★★★★	64
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	★★★★	66
⚡ Auto Modellista	Capcom	★★½	69
⓫ **Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home**	**Eidos**	★★½	**75**
CHECK OUT PAGE 147 Here, someone gave us not only a slick wrestling move, but also cheat codes.			
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	★★★★½	52
Barbarian	Titus	★★	57
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	★½	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	★★	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	★★★	51
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	★★★½	65
Beyond Good and Evil	Ubisoft	★★★★	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	★★★	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	★★½	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	★★★★	67
Blade II	Activision	★★	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	★★★½	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	★★★½	63
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	★★★½	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	★	75
BMX XXX	Acclaim	★½	65
Bombastic	Capcom	★★½	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	★★★★	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	★★★★	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	★★★	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	★★★	73
Burnout	Acclaim	★★★★½	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	★★★★	63



138 X-TRA!
Final Fantasy X-2
Your path to 100%-ness.



142 CLANK!
R&C: Going Commando
Tips on going commando.



144 SKATE!
Tony Hawk's Underground
Build better tricks.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	●●◐	67
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◐	74
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◐	51
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◐	50
⑥ Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74

HP
MP
60
2 Hit!
Total 30 Damage
21
Skeleton Swordman

INNOCENT SECRETS

Unlockable	How to Unlock
All Skills	Beat the game as Leon, select New Game, and enter your name as @LLSKILL.
Boss Rush Mode	Beat the game, save it, and then go to the level-selection screen with the same character you beat it with.
Joachim Armster	Beat the game as Leon. At the Name entry screen, enter your name as @JOACHIM.
Music Box	After you beat the game, save the file. When you go to Rinaldo's cottage, you can buy the Music Box and play all the music at the main menu.
Pumpkin Mode	Beat the game as Joachim Armster and save it. Enter @PUMPKIN as your name at the Name entry screen.

Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◐	70
⚡ Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◐	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69
City Crisis	Take 2	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	★★★★★	68
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	Gotham Games	●◐	63
⑬ Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74

OLD-FASHION CHEAT MENU Input this at the main menu screen: L1, L1, R1, R1, □, □, △, △, ○, ○. Afterward, you can go into options and open the Cheats menu.

Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◐	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◐	64
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	Universal	●●●◐	51
Crazy Taxi	Acclaim	●●●●	46
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◐	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◐	49
Dark Cloud	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	46
Dark Cloud 2	Sony CEA	★★★★★	66
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◐	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	●●●◐	50
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◐	39
Dead to Rights	Namco	●●●	65
Def Jam: Vendetta	EA Sports Big	●●●●	67
Defender	Midway	●●●◐	62
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◐	56
Devil May Cry	Capcom	★★★★★	50
Devil May Cry 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◐	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◐	65

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◐	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◐	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◐	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◐	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari	●●●◐	65
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◐	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◐	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◐	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◐	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◐	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	●●●●◐	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◐	75
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◐	56
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◐	61
eJay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	Atari	●●●	71
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◐	49
Escape From Monkey Island	LucasArts	★★★★★	46
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◐	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⑨ ⚡ ESPN NBA Basketball	Sega Sports	★★★★★	75

MAD UNLOCKABLES FOR ESPN

2K4 Team	Record 15 double-doubles.
ABA Ball	Play in 1 street mode game.
All Atlantic Retros	Record 5 wins with any Atlantic division team.
All Central Retros	Record 5 wins with any Central division team.
All Midwest Retros	Record 5 wins with any Midwest division team.
All Pacific Retros	Record 5 wins with any Pacific division team.
All-time 76ers	Grab a total of 150 rebounds.
All-time Celtics	Block a total of 100 shots.
All-time Lakers	Steal the ball a total of 20 times.
All-time Sonics	Dish out a total of 150 assists.
Bonus Street Court	Play in 20 street mode games.
ESPN Ball	Play in 5 street mode games.
Ooga Booga Ball	Play in 15 street mode games.
Rock Ball	Play in 10 street mode games.
Rookie Class	Score a total of 100 points.
Sophomore Class	Score a total of 500 points.
Superstars team	Steal the ball a total of 100 times.
VC Team	Record 15 triple-doubles.

⚡ ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega Sports	●●●●◐	73
⚡ ESPN NFL Football	Sega Sports	●●●●◐	72
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◐	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡ EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online Ent.	●●◐	66
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52

REPLAY FORUM

READERS LOVE VOLDO

OK, now here is the Voldo move I have nearly perfected. Command legend:
B = Vertical attack
A = Horizontal attack
G = Guard
Away = Direction away from opponent
Towards = Direction towards opponent

Start with a Calistro Rush (Away+B+K, hold), then perform a Centipede Nightmare (B+G, adjust distance as needed by holding).

Then, while the enemy is down and you are in the Mantis Crawl stance, do a Mantis Fire Dance (Towards, Towards). Then to finish, you can do anything, but I like to quickly do a Freak Roll (A+B) if he is close enough or if he rolled towards me after the Fire Dance. If performed and timed right, this can inflict up to (or past) the halfway point of the enemy's health bar depending on weapons and Soul Charge.

A quick overview: (Away+B+K, hold), then (B+G, adjust distance as needed by holding), followed by (Towards, Towards) and finally, (A+B).

James Tollefson
jtollefson@accesscom.ca

Thanks for the interesting move! Keep 'em coming!

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◐	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◐	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
F1 2001	EA Sports	★★★★★	52
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	60
F1 Career Challenge	EA Sports	★★★★★	71
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◐	41
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◐	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	EA Sports	★★★★★	63
⚡ FIFA Soccer 2004	EA Sports	★★★★★	75
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◐	64
Final Fantasy X	Square EA	★★★★★	53
Final Fantasy X-2	Square Enix USA	★★★★★	75
Finding Nemo	THQ	●●●◐	71
Fireblade	Midway	●●◐	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◐	53
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◐	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◐	72
Freedom Fighters	EA Games	★★★★★	73
Freekstyle	EA Sports Big	●●●●	59
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◐	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◐	53
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◐	72
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◐	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◐	50
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◐	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◐	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	●●●●	66
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◐	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◐	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Godai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◐	54
Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◐	39
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	Sony CEA	★★★★★	46
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◐	68
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Rockstar	★★★★★	63
Grand Theft Auto III	Rockstar	★★★★★	52
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◐	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◐	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◐	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◐	72
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◐	58
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◐	61
Gungriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◐	39
Half-Life	Sierra	★★★★★	51
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA Games	●●●	75
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●◐	64
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◐	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◐	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◐	55

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OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

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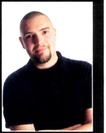
200+ FOR 2004!

Another crazy year ahead



John Davison
Editor-in-Chief

The past year has certainly been a good one. While we've not had the mega-blockbusters like *Grand Theft Auto* or *Metal Gear Solid* in 2003, there have been plenty of games that broke the million sales mark and kept us excited about the PS2. Why videogame publishers continue to think people are only interested in buying games around the holidays still eludes us, but at least the past month or so has been interesting. There will be some fallout, unfortunately, and I'm sure we'll see some franchises crushed before their time, simply because they were suffocated by the deluge of games appearing on shelves at the same time. Titles like EA's *Rising Sun* will no doubt flourish at the expense of arguably more worthy games that will hit stores on the same day.

Originally we'd thought things might slow down a bit next year, but we no longer see any evidence of that. We have more than 200 games in our 2004 preview, and we know there have *got* to be a few titles we missed. Plus, there are a whole bunch more we know of that we're not allowed to tell you about just yet. It's going to be a blockbuster year, too: There's a *Gran Turismo*, a *Grand Theft Auto* and a *Metal Gear* on the way—all within a few months of each other.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

JASON & HEATHER MARTIN

Jason and Heather, hot off their assignment illustrating last month's Holiday Buyers' Guide, put together an astonishingly comprehensive illustration of where games take place. Check out all the little details.

www.artplaymix.com

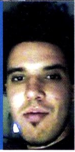
JOHN SCALZI

John's new book, *The Book of the Dumb*, is out on store shelves right now. Go buy it, then visit his site for his daily (well, frequent) musings on all things political, musical, and astronomical. Do it, it's good for you.

www.scalzi.com

MIGUEL LOPEZ

Miguel works for *GameNOW*, one of our sister magazines. He chimed in this month with some *Dragon Ball Z* review goodness. He also has the best hair you will ever see. You may think you have better hair than his, but you are wrong.



DAVID SMITH

Dave, who's the news editor at **1up.com**, wrote a bunch of reviews of pretty crappy games for us this month, and we repaid him by giving him more crappy games. Luckily, he wasn't too angry to write up our anime column.

www.1up.com

Videogames Have Ratings, Just Like Movies

The Entertainment Software Rating Board provides information about videogame content. ESRB ratings are intended as guidelines only; parents should still monitor minors' purchases.

WWW.ESRB.ORG

EARLY CHILDHOOD eC CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB	ADULTS ONLY AO CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
EARLY CHILDHOOD RATING Deemed suitable for children 3 or older. Products carrying this label have absolutely no material that would be considered inappropriate by parents.	**EVERYONE RATING** The E replaced the previous K-A rating last year. Suitable for kids ages 6 and up, E-rated games may contain minimal violence or crude language.	**TEEN RATING** Contains suggestive themes; mild or strong language; and animated violence. Some parents may want to supervise children playing T-rated games.	**MATURE RATING** These games contain more adult themes, such as blood and gore; stronger language; and sexual themes. Deemed not suitable for those under 17.	**ADULTS ONLY RATING** The extreme of the ratings, suitable for adults only. Packs sexual themes and extreme violence. Console manufacturers have yet to allow an AO-rated game.

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Senior Director, Manufacturing
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Contact anyone on this masthead using firstname_lastname@ziffdavis.com

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THANKS, PRIMA!
These pages are courtesy of Prima's *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* guide.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Surviving Shelob and the Wall at Minas Tirith

Shelob

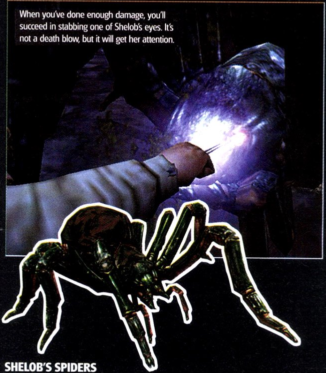
Shelob is a difficult enemy to get a handle on. Her many legs are always flailing, moving her about or attacking you. It can be unclear which leg is which in the heat of the battle, making it difficult to decide when to attack.

Run up to the creature and begin your assault. Her back is to you, so you get a free hit. **Try the Orc Hewer move.** It can deal a lot of damage, especially if you get two of them off.

Tester tip: When you see Shelob scuttling toward you, charge in to meet her with speed and fierce attacks, then quickly jump back. Repeat this pattern to finish her off quickly.

Your first strike can take Shelob unaware.

After that, you don't get any free shots. Press your advantage as long as you can. Eventually, the monster finds her footing and comes back at you. **Parry her leg strikes (three in a row), then come back with your own hits.** After you damage her a few times, you'll get a cut-scene showing Sam putting out one of the vile creature's eyes.



When you've done enough damage, you'll succeed in stabbing one of Shelob's eyes. It's not a death blow, but it will get her attention.

SHELOB'S SPIDERS

After Sam strikes that mighty blow, Shelob retreats to the wall and calls forth some large spiders to attack you. You've dealt with this type of monster before. There are several of them, and they attempt to surround you.

Time is of the essence. **You need to slay them before Shelob jumps down, because it will be easier to fight Shelob without her minions crawling around.** Rush the first spider you see and use the Final Judgment move. Repeat that with the next spider, and so on. If you're quick enough, you can dispatch a number of them before the others are close enough to harm you. Be bold. Parry an attack and counter with the Final Judgment. This keeps you healthy.

SHELOB'S COMEBACK

When you destroy the spiders (or enough time passes), Shelob leaps from her perch and tries to slam you to the ground. You have to be moving soon after she leaves the wall to avoid it, so be ready.

If she misses you, the impact leaves her flat for a moment. **Dart in and take your swings while she's stunned.** When she recovers, Shelob will scuttle toward you, take several strikes, then scuttle back. Parry her attacks, then strike as she's moving in or moving away.

Orc Hewer works well here, but Shelob's attacks may interrupt you. The timing is tricky. Rush at her head, getting in close. This keeps you out of range of her legs (until she moves again) and allows you another attack or two.

When Shelob's taken enough, she'll retreat and send more of her brood. **Use the same tactics, charging and attacking with Final Judgment, to thin their ranks.**

When Shelob leaps down again, the sparring that follows is grueling. At times, she'll sidestep to avoid you, circling as you try to catch up. To get her, cut across her path and swipe as she moves.

Charge into your foes to keep them from swarming you.

25
3140/15000

Having Shelob knocked flat is a rare opportunity. Take advantage of it.

Getting next to Shelob's head is a good vantage point for your attacks.

HACK A LEG OFF

When you've made enough hits on Shelob, a cut-scene shows Sam hacking off part of one of her forelegs. This drives the spider into a frenzy—she bolts, knocking you over, and gallops around the lair.

After Sam regains his feet, you can dodge Shelob as she dashes around the area. After a few moments, she'll retreat to the wall and call out a large group of spiders to come after you.

You can use the same tactics; don't end up surrounded by the beasts. Keep to the edges and take on the one closest to you.

After you clear them away, Shelob will join the fray. Her attacks are less effective, because she's missing one of her forelegs, but you still need to be alert as you trade blows.

Be ready for another wave of Shelob's brood while she sulks on the wall. This one is a large group, so don't rush into their midst. Pick away at the ones on the edges, working your way through them.

Sam wields his sword well and Shelob pays the price, but when she charges, there's no avoiding getting bowled over.

30
7416/15000

SQUASH SHELOB

By now, Shelob is weak. Continue crowding her, getting close enough to use your Orc Hewer or strike at her with speed attacks. When you drain away the last of her health bar, a cut-scene shows Sam's victory.

Which is better, the movie or the game? Tell us how you feel at opm@ziffdavis.com.

12/14/05 Rumored release date for Peter Jackson's next film: his remake of 1933's *King Kong*.

www.onering.net Your one-stop source for everything related to Peter Jackson's *LOTR* films.

The Wall at Minas Tirith

The task at hand on the walls of Minas Tirith is to keep the orcs at bay. They will try to use ladders and siege engines to get up on the parapet. Some will make it, but you need to keep the numbers down. **In the upper-right corner, note the map of the wall and the overrun meter.** The map uses red dots to show you the location of ladders. The meter is a gauge of how many orcs are on the wall. **If it fills with red, the wall is overrun and you lose. Reduce the meter by knocking down ladders and destroying orcs on the wall.**

When a siege ladder goes up, a bright red dot appears on the map. After you push it away, the dot will clear off.

LADDER START

Immediately after the level starts, two ladders will be put up to your right. **Run to the closest and use your Kick button to push it away.** Carve through the orcs and turn the corner to get at the second one. Knock it back and clean away any remaining orcs.

In the middle section of the wall, there are large grappling hooks. **Step close to one and press the Action button to have Gandalf slide to a ledge beneath the wall.** From there, you can run around the middle section and push away ladders without having to deal with orcs. The grapples also become essential later on.

SIEGE TOWER

After a time, you'll see a siege tower being pushed to the wall by a troll. If the tower reaches the wall, a stream of orcs will pour out. **The easiest way to deal with it is with a catapult.** There's one on a tower to the east of the start point (the towers are denoted on the map by a large, blinking red dot).

Climb the stairs to the catapult area and stand in the action circle near the winch. You'll be able to watch the tower as it moves closer. **Press your Action button to fire the large weapon.** Two blows from the catapult will send the tower crashing to the ground.

TOWER TWO

Run to the wall and continue kicking ladders and destroying orcs. Soon, a second tower appears as a big, blinking red dot on the map. It is near the wall's eastern arm.

You don't have a convenient catapult for this tower; you'll have to topple it with your ranged attack.

Once again, if the tower makes it to the wall, a horde of foes will jump out.

After the second tower falls, a third one will appear on your map, where the first one was destroyed. **Use the catapult again for this threat.**

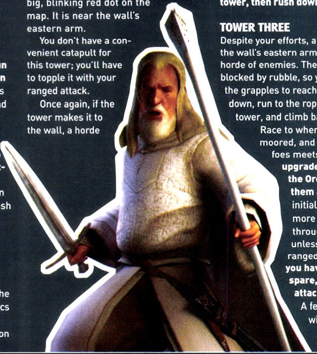
After the catapult is launched once, a Nazgûl will appear on its flying mount. **Target it with your ranged attack and fire quickly.** If you don't drive it off, the Ringwraith will carry away one of the soldiers manning the catapult.

When the Ringwraith falls, it crashes into the wall, crushing stones and blocking your path to the eastern arm. **Fire the catapult a second time to destroy the tower, then rush down to the wall.**

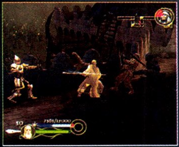
TOWER THREE

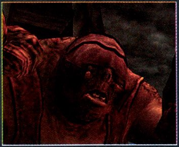
Despite your efforts, a tower will reach the wall's eastern arm, disgorging a horde of enemies. The way out is now blocked by rubble, so you'll need to use the grapples to reach the ledge. Climb down, run to the rope closest to the tower, and climb back up.

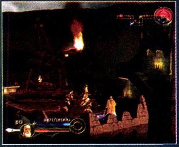
Race to where the tower is moored, and a large number of foes meets you. **Use your upgrades and moves (like the Orc Hewer) to clear them away.** After the initial group is gone, more will climb up through the tower unless you smash it with ranged attacks. **When you have a moment to spare, use the ranged attack to hit the tower.** A few strikes, and it will fall.

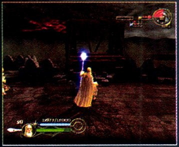


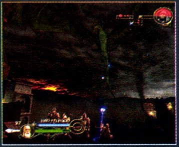
THE WALL AT A GLIMPSE

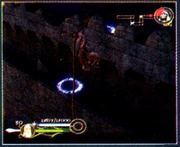

The longer the ladders are in place, the more orcs you'll have to deal with.


The lumbering troll pushes a siege tower to the wall, threatening your defense.


Gandalf can direct the catapult fire. Waste no time destroying the structure.


To take it head on, fire at the tower from in front of it.


The Nazgûl will come after the catapult soldiers if you don't do something.


Use the grapples and the ledge to get past the blocked portion of the wall.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	★★★★★	**67**
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos	★★★★½	63
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony CEA	★★★★	55
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	★★½	64
The Hulk	Vivendi Universal	★★★★	70
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	★★½	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	★★½	67
I-Ninja	Namco	★★★½	75
Ico	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**50**
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	★★★	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	★★★	71
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	★★★½	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	★★	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	★★★½	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**52**
❸ **Jak II**	**Sony CEA**	★★★½	**74**
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	EA Games	★★★★	52
James Bond 007: NightFire	Activision	★★★★½	64
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	★★	65
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	★	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	★★	63
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	★½	54
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	★★★	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	★★★★½	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	★★	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	★★★★	75
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	★★★½	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	★★★	42
Kessen	EA Games	★★★	39
Kessen II	Koei	★★★	51
Kill.Switch	Namco	★★★★½	75
Kinetica	Sony CEA	★★★★½	50
The King of Route 66	Sega	★★★	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	★★	55
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	★★★★½	61
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	★★★★½	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	★★★★	55
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	★★½	48
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	★★★	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	★½	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	★★½	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	★★★	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	★★★	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	★★½	51
Lethal Skies	Sammy	★★★	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	★★★½	74
The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	★★★½	63
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	★★★★½	63
⚡ **The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King**	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**75**
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	★★	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	★★★	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★½	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	48
⚡ **Madden NFL 2003**	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**60**

Do the following tasks during gameplay to unlock these items.

Unlockable	How to Unlock
Alt. Scrap Book	**Collect 200 orbs.**
Big Head	**Collect 30 orbs.**
Hero Mode	**Collect 200 orbs (just like Alt. Scrap Book).**
Invulnerability	**Collect 175 orbs.**
Jak's Goatee	**Collect 5 orbs.**
Level Select	**Collect 145 orbs.**
Mirror World	**Collect 15 orbs.**
Peace Maker Gun Course	**Collect 105 orbs.**
Reverse Races	**Collect 135 orbs.**
Scene Player Act 1	**Collect 65 orbs.**
Scene Player Act 2	**Collect 95 orbs.**
Scene Player Act 3	**Collect 125 orbs.**
Scrap Book	**Collect 55 orbs.**
Small Head	**Collect 45 orbs.**
Unlimited Ammo	**Collect 155 orbs.**
Unlimited Dark Jak	**Collect 165 orbs.**
Vulcan Fury	**Collect 75 orbs.**

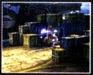
www.sweetbox.com
Head here for info on the gal who sings the opening song for *FFX-2.*

FINAL FANTASY X-2

Walkthrough of Chapter 1

Sure, you can get through FFX-2 easy enough. But getting 100 percent? That's a much tougher prospect. With multiple endings, though, FFX-2 is worth playing through multiple times. If you want to get a jump on the very best ending, then use our handy guide for the game's first chapter.

1.6% LUCA



- Veer to the left when you reach the second boat, and **you will find a person crouching, dressed up as a moogle ▶.** If you talk to the person, your party will be healed.
- Complete mission 1 by taking on Leblanc, Ormi, and Logos. This is an easy battle, so take a little time to get used to switching the girls' jobs using the Garment Grid: First Steps.

This sideways text is delighted to be brushing up against the dark, delicious leg of the sultry Paine.

PAINE IN THE...

So it's not "pine" after all.

Square originally told us to pronounce her name as "pine." But then they changed their mind. And that's that.

3.4% CELSIUS

- You return to the *Celsius* every time you complete a mission. **Take a few minutes to talk to Rikku ▶, Paine, Brother, Buddy, and Shinra.** You'll get a little backstory on each of them. You may want to spend some extra time with Shinra; his tutorial text is quite helpful.

- Next, talk to the barkeep, who's working in the cabin. **Before leaving the cabin, accept his invitation to take a nap ▶.**
- Return to the bridge and talk to Shinra. Watch the sphere movie called Journey's Start.

6.0% MOUNT GAGAZET

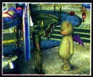
Touch it
Never mind.

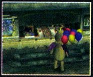
- Get to the top of Mount Gagazet before the timer runs out. If you can't get to the top in five minutes, you'll miss out on a star pendant, which is located in a treasure chest at the peak.
- Don't mistake your second run-in with Leblanc as this mission's boss fight; the real challenge comes when you reach the top of the mountain. **This spider boss is toppled by repeated gunner and warrior attacks ▲.** Just make sure you keep an eye on your health and use potions when the girls' health points turn from white to yellow. If you succeed, you'll be rewarded with the Dark Mage Sphere.

6.6% CELSIUS

- When you're transported back to the *Celsius*, talk to Brother and choose the Comfort Him option.

8.2% LUCA





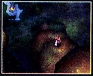
- Yuna will tell her pals about how she bided her time while waiting for them to raid the concert. The flashback puts her in a moogle outfit; **approach the vendor at the right of the balloon stand (he's crouching, so he can be tough to see) ▶.**
- Hand out 10 balloons and **don't forget to knock on the ticket window at the back center of the square ▶.** Upon completing the mission, you will receive the Garment Grid: Healing Wind.
- When you complete your task, you'll be pulled back into the *Celsius.* **Return to Luca immediately and track down Rin, who's waiting for you in the Luca stadium basement ▶.**

8.4% HIGH ROAD

- Take a little time to investigate the High Road.

13.0% MUSHROOM ROCK

- When you get to Mushroom Rock, you'll see a group of Youth league soldiers guarding the path to their hideout. Talk first to Clasko; it's important to hear his story before moving forward.
- Yavel will challenge you to take on a Fiend Conquest mission; accept it and make your way to the end of the ravine. If you succeed, you'll be rewarded with the Garment Grid: Heart of Flame.



- **At Youth league headquarters, approach Lucil and make sure you talk with her twice ▶.**
- Listen to Maechen's story; don't end the conversation with him until he shakes Yuna's hand.
- Don't go straight back to the ship. Instead, **head back down the ravine and investigate the sloping area pictured to the right ▶.** Head north and keep your eye out for a treasure chest containing Garment Grid: Restless Sleep.
- You'll run across Ormi and **Logos ▶,** but this time, things don't devolve into fighting. They'll drop a sphere (Crimson Sphere 9); you need to pick it up and then talk to Maroda, who appears behind you.
- Continue backtracking to the save globe that you started at when you were first transported to Mushroom Rock. Offscreen, to the right of the globe, you'll find Clasko. Talk him into joining you on the *Celsius.* When he boards, go back to the ship yourself. This is very easy to miss—if you do, you can't get 100 percent completion.

13.5% CELSIUS

- View the Crimson squad report 1 in Shinra's Treasure Sphere collection.
- Head down to the cabin and talk to Clasko. He'll be feeling a little sick.

14.0% DJOSE TEMPLE

- This area requires a little patience. Talk to everybody outside the temple while waiting for the registration line to wind down. When it's your turn, enter the tent and talk to a recruiter; he'll instruct you to speak with Gippal in the temple.
- **Head to the temple and chat with Gippal ▲.** He will give you a letter of introduction.

14.6% MOONFLOW

- Talk to Tobli, the goofy short guy in the bird costume. He will give you an assignment and promise you a sphere as a reward.
- When you find Tobli's assistant, agree to help him and make sure you don't let bandits steal any of the packages. **When you return the carriage to Tobli, you will receive the ultrauseful Gun Mage Dressphere ▲.**

100%

The total you can get in *FFX-2*.

15.0% GUADOSALAM

- Find the Farplane entrance and talk to the guards. They will keep you from entering, so go to the Thunder Plains instead.

15.2% THUNDER PLAINS

- Walk through the Thunder Plains if your party is strong enough to handle the fiends.

17.4% MACALANIA WOODS

- This area will reintroduce you to the tragic Guados. The first one you'll run across is a musician named Bayra. Follow him all the way to the travel agency, which is where you need to go. Watch the cut-scene involving O'aka, then return to the woods.
- To your immediate right, you'll find an alcove. In the alcove is a man named Tomell. **Talk to Tomell five times. He will give you a very important dressphere ▶.**

- **Find Pukutak, who's hanging out in the northern area of the forest ▶.**

- Find Donga, who's located at the Holy Spring.
- To the right of the Holy Spring, you'll find O'aka's hiding place. **Talk to him and agree to let him board the *Celsius* ▶.** As a prize, you will receive the Garment Grid: Ice Queen.

- For the 100-percent ending, you'll need to clear O'aka's debt before protecting the travel agency in Chapter 3.

18.2% BIKANEL DESERT

- Rikku will take you on what feels like a wild goose chase through the desert. Follow, and when you collapse, Al Bhed diggers will carry you to safety.
- Wait around until Nhadala returns, then show her the letter of invitation you received from Gippal. She will send you on a mission to excavate Al Bhed machine parts. Complete the task, and you will earn Garment Grid: Still of Night.

18.8% BEVELLE

- Look up Baralai, who's located in the center of the city. Hear him out, then head back to the *Celsius*.

19.0% CALM LAND

- **Check out Calm Land and put some money into a few lupine races ▶.**
- Before you go, take on a PR job at one of the two competing companies.

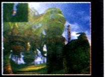
19.4% MOUNT GAGAZET

- Run over to Mount Gagazet for a little backstory on Kumari's plight with the Ronso.

21.6% BESAID ISLAND

- Many people jump to Besaid Island first, which is fine, but we find that it's easier (and more fun) to take it on near the end of Chapter 1. Your characters should be fairly powerful by now, and the fiends should be a breeze to kill.

- Say hello to **Wakka ▶.**
- Talk to the inhabitants of the temple.
- Stop by Lulu's tent and stay the night.
- In the morning, agree to help Lulu find Wakka. Head away from the temple and watch for pink marks on your overhead map. Each one (of four total) will yield a number. **Some, like the one pictured below, require you to climb in order to reach them (hold ○) ▶.**



- Dial the combo you've just gathered into the lock near the pier and enter the cave to talk to Wakka. Paine will insist that the gullwings help him find the sphere he's looking for.

- The flame dragon should be easy to kill at this point in the game. Don't use fire to attack (it's immune to fire)—use ice. Also, have one of the girls perform the Darkness Dance during the battle to keep the flame dragon blind. **Completing this mission will add the White Mage Dressphere to your collection ▲.**

23.4% ZANARKAND RUINS

- So, what is Zanarkand like today? It's become an amusement park! Kind of offensive, eh? Yuna thinks so, too, so make sure she speaks her mind to both Isaaru and **Cid** (don't let 'em off easy) ▶.

- After talking to Isaaru in the temple, **head down the stairwell to confront the giant sanctuary guard protecting the Broken Treasure Sphere ▶.** Don't bother hitting him with magic attacks—he's immune to all of them. Just hack away with your swords and pistols and make sure you keep your eye on all of the girls' health meters. When he's down, you will be given the Protection Halo.

23.6% CELSIUS

- Take a few minutes to refresh in the ship; talk to all of your teammates.

25.2% KILIKA

- Go to Dona's house; watch an amusing back-and-forth between her and Barthello.
- Take the narrow forest path to Kilika Temple. Guards will block your path and ask for passwords. If there is an even number of guards in front of you, the password is Craven Monkey. If there is an odd number, the password is Carved Monkey.

- **At the end of the path is the YSLS-ZERO mech. Be careful—he is not vulnerable to magic. It's best to hit him with as much firepower as possible right from the beginning, so don't waste time setting up a white mage. Keep your party limited to warriors and gunners ▶.**
- Toppling YSLS-ZERO will bag you 1,500 gil and mucho experience points. It will also mark the end of Chapter 1.

Want to see how to get through the remaining 74.8% of the game? Keep an eye out for our blowout of Chapters 2 through 5 in the January issue of *GameNOW*!

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⑧ ⚡ **Madden NFL 2004**	**EA Sport s**	★★★★★	**72**

CHEAP WAY TO MAKE MONEY Start a regular game (season or home playoff), save, and then quit. Reload your franchise file, and it will resume where you last saved, but the computer will recharge everyone, so all your ticket sales, concessions, and whatnot will be doubled. This works only when you're the home team, though.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●●	53
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	●●●◐	54
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◐	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**58**
⑮ **Mega Man X7**	**Capcom**	●●●◐	**74**

QUICK TIP Both life and energy subtanks heal only the currently selected character. So if someone is hurting badly, use the other character to do all the killing until a life subtank appears, then quickly switch to the injured character and collect the subtank before it disappears.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◐	60
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2	**Konami**	★★★★★	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	★★★★★	**67**
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	●●●●	**39**
⚡ **Midnight Club II**	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**67**
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◐	65
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◐	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
MLB Slugfest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◐	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◐	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◐	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◐	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◐	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway	●●●●	64
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP2	Namco	●●●●◐	53
MotoGP3	Namco	●●●●◐	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◐	52
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◐	67
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◐	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◐	59
⚡ My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◐	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◐	64
Namco Museum	Namco	●●●◐	53
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◐	40
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◐	62
⚡ **NASCAR Thunder 2004**	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**73**
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◐	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**53**
⚡ **NBA 2K3**	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**63**
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◐	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◐	51

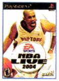
REPLAY

You make game go boom.

ALSO KNOWN AS...

C-4, or Composition-4, is part of the family of standardized plastic explosives used by the U.S. military.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡ NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	★★★★	63
❶ ⚡ **NBA Live 2004**	**EA Sports**	★★★★½	**75**



Type these codes into the Password screen to get more Nikes.

DG56TRF446	Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 1
3245AFSD45	Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 2
DSAKF38422	Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 3
A0K374HF8S	Air Hyperflight Colorway 3
JCX93LSS88	Air Hyperflight Colorway 4
367UEY6SN	Air Zoom Flight Colorway 1
2389JASE3E	Air Flightposite II Colorway 2
GF9845JHR4	Air Flight 89 Colorway 3

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	★★½	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	★★★	63
⚡ NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	★★★	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	★★½	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**47**
NBA Street Vol. 2	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**68**
⚡ NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	★★½	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	★	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	989 Sports	★½	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	★★½	64
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	48
⚡ **NCAA Football 2003**	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**60**
⚡ **NCAA Football 2004**	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**71**
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	★½	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	★★	61
⚡ NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	★★½	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	★★★	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	★★★	64
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**62**
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	★★★½	**52**
⚡ NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★½	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	★★★★	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	★★★½	60
⚡ NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	★★★	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	★	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	★½	53
⚡ NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	★★½	61
⚡ NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	★★★	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	★★½	50
NHL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	★★★½	63
⚡ NHL 2004	EA Sports	★★★★	73
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	★★★½	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	★★	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	★★★★	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	★★★★½	62
⚡ NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	★★★★	73
Ninja Assault	Namco	★★½	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	★★★½	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	★★★	51
Oni	Rockstar	★½	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	★★★★	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	★★★★	60
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	★★★	39
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	★★	60
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	★★★★½	54
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	★★★½	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	★★	53
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	★★★½	55
Portal Runner	3DO	★★	50
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	★★	65
Pride FC	THQ	★★★★	65
Primal	Sony CEA	★★★★	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	**Ubisoft**	★★★★★	**75**
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	★★★★½	65
Project Eden	Eidos	★★★½	52
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	★★½	60
P.T.O. IV	Koei	★★★	66
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take 2	★★★½	40
Quake III Revolution	EA Games	★★★★½	44
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	★★★	64
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**75**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	★★★★★	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	★★★½	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	★★★½	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	★★½	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	★★★★	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	★★★½	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	★★★	57
Red Faction	**THQ**	★★★★★	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	★★★★	63
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	★★★★	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	★★★½	63
Resident Evil–Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	★★★★½	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	★★★½	70
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	★★★½	71
Rez	Sega	★★★★½	53
Ridge Racer V	Namco	★★★★½	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	★★★½	61
Ring of Red	Konami	★★★★	43
⚡ Risk: Global Domination	Atari	★★★★	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	★★★	62
Road Kill	Midway	★★★★	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	★★★★	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	★★½	74
Rocky	Ubisoft	★★★★	64
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	★★★★	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	★★★½	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	★★½	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	★★½	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	★★★	73
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	★★★½	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	★★	71
Rugby	EA Sports	★★★½	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	★★★	73
Rumble Racing	EA Games	★★★★½	45
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take 2	★★½	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	★★★★½	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	★★½	55
Savage Skies	Bam	★★★	56
Scooby-Doo: Night of 100 Frights	THQ	★★★	58
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	★★	62
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	★★★★	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	★★★½	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	★★★	62
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	★★	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	★★★★½	60
Shadow Hearts	Midway	★★★★	52
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	★★★½	43
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	★★	57
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	★★½	52
Shifters	3DO	★	58
Shinobi	Sega	★★★½	63
Shox	EA Sports Big	★★★½	63
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	★★½	64
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	★★★★½	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	★★★★½	71
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	★★★½	70
Silent Scope	Konami	★★★	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	★★★½	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	★★★½	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	★★★½	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	★★★★	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	★★★	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	★½	64
The Sims	EA Games	★★★★	65
Sky Gunner	Atlus	★★★½	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	★★★	40
Sled Storm	EA Big	★★★½	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**62**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	★★★½	71
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Namco	★★★½	56
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	★★★★½	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	★★★★½	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	★★	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	★★★½	59
⚡ **SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**60**
❹ ⚡ **SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**75**

JOEPM'S FAVORITE GUN M4A1 with grenade launcher (commonly called the "over-and-under" by other players). The fellows at Zipper call it the "n00b tube" because its fusion of explosives and rifleness make it easy for total newbies to score kills with.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	★★★	52
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	★★★★★	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	★★★	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	★★★½	75
Space Race	Infogrames	★★½	59
Speed Kings	Acclaim	★★★★	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	★★★½	75
Spider-Man	Activision	★★★★½	57
Splashdown	Infogrames	★★★★	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	★★★★★	**72**
Splinter Cell	Sony CEA	★★★★½	68
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	★★★★½	75
SpyHunter	Midway	★★★★½	50
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi Universal	★★★	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**52**
❼ ⚡ **SSX 3**	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**74**

SSXY SECRETS Here's a quick and handy guide to all the secret character skins and how to unlock 'em.

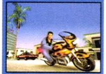
Unlockable	How to Unlock
Brodi skin	Complete the peak 1 lodge.
Bunny San	Collect all the art.
Canhuck	Complete all peak 3 exploration goals.
Churchill	Complete the peak 3 freestyle.
Cudmore	Complete the peak 3 earnings goal.
Eddie skin	Complete the peak 2 lodge.
Far East Myth	Get 100 percent in all mountain stats.
Gutless	Get a medal in all events.
Hiro	Collect all the trading cards.
JP	Complete the peak 1 lodge.
Jurgen	Complete all peak 1 goals.
Luther skin	Complete the peak 2 lodge.
Marisol	Complete the peak 1 lodge.
Marty	Complete the peak 2 lodge.
NW legend	Complete all peak 3 goals.
Seeiah	Complete the peak 2 lodge.
Snowballs	Complete all peak 2 goals.
Stretch	Collect all the posters.
Svelte Luther	Collect all the toys.
Unknown Rider	Complete all peak 3 race goals.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	★★	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	★★½	53
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts	★★★	64
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	★★★	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	★★	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	★★★½	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	★★★★½	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	★★★★½	**43**
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	★★	74
State of Emergency	Rockstar	★★★	55
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	★★½	59
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	★★★½	39
Street Hoops	Activision	★★★½	60
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	★★★½	47
Stuntman	Infogrames/Atari	★★★	59
Sub Rebellion	Metro 3D	★★★★	62
Suikoden III	Konami	★★★	63
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	★★★½	72
Summoner	THQ	★★★	39
Summoner 2	THQ	★★★½	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	★★★½	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	★★★	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	★★★½	63
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	★★½	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	★★★½	63

REPLAY FORUM

GTA: VC BY BOAT: In *GTA: Vice City*, I found the big Columbian Cartel boat you blew up with 8ball in *GTA3*. Get in a helicopter and head for the North Point Mall. Land on the roof and start heading directly north. Once out to sea, start looking around in the water. Somewhere in this general vicinity, you'll find the sunken Cartel boat and a submarine. This works best during a time of day when the water is clear. RADICAL DUDE!!!

Alex D.
alexBD@houston.rr.com



GTA: VC BAGGAGE: This neat bug is for *Vice City*. Get a baggage car from the airport and take it to the bomb shop and get a bomb. Drive to the Malibu and drive through the front door. Park the car and go to the exit. You will be in the Malibu. Now drive the car into the people and detonate the bomb. For extra fun, use the slow game cheat!

James Carroll
pinhead72183@yahoo.com

APE ESCAPED! Someone said that you can see Spike in *Ape Escape 2*, but I don't have the issue where you say so. How do you do it?

Peter Boulle

First, find all 300 monkeys. Then, go and highlight New Game at the Main menu and hit L1 + Start.

SADM

Stands for Special Atomic Demolition Munition, the U.S. version of the Russian suitcase bomb. Invented in the 1960s, it was declassified and made public in 1997.

SEMTEX

Named after Semtin, an east Bohemian suburb where Stanislav Brebera invented it in 1966.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Surfing H30	Rockstar	✪✪	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	✪✪✪	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	✪✪✪	38
Tak and the Power of Juju	THQ	✪✪✪◐	75
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	✪✪✪◐	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	✪✪✪◐	60
⑭ **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**	**Konami**	✪✪◐	**75**

HOLIDAY CHEER

Tell your PS2 that it's either December 24th, 25th, or October 31st. Whenever you play *TMNT* on one of these days, the Turtles will wear something festive for the holiday.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Tekken 4	Namco	✪✪✪◐	61
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	✪✪✪✪◐	**39**
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	✪✪✪	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	✪✪◐	63
Test Drive	Infogrames	✪✪✪◐	58
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	✪✪✪	48
Tetris Worlds	THQ	✪✪	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	✪✪✪✪	41
The Thing	Universal	✪✪✪	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	✪◐	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	✪✪✪	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪◐	63
⑫ **⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004**	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**73**

Golf away with some codes! Enter these codes for various surprises:

THEKITCHENSINK	All courses and golfers
ALLTHETRACKS	All courses
CANYOUPICKONE	All golfers

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Time Crisis 2	Namco	✪✪✪✪	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	✪✪✪✪◐	74
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	★★★★★	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	★★★★★	**63**
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	✪✪◐	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	✪✪✪◐	65
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos	✪✪	72
⑤ **⚡Tony Hawk's Underground**	**Activision**	★★★★★	**76**

Unlockable	How to Unlock
Alternate Ending	Complete story mode twice.
Create-a-Deck Mode	Beat "Slamma Jamma" in story mode.
Gene Simmons	Complete story mode on Normal difficulty.
Hotter Than Hell	Beat story mode on any skill level.
Iron Man	Complete Beginners story mode.
Level: *THPS2* Hangar	Find old skool icon on Moscow map.
Movie: Always Hard	Find nine secret tapes.
Movie: Bails 1	Find three secret tapes.
Movie: Bails 2	Find six secret tapes.
Movie: KISS Concert	Activate K-I-S-S letters on Hotter Than Hell level.
Pedestrians	Find every gap in the game.
Level: *THPS2* School 2	There's a red icon in the back quarter-pipe section of the train station in NJ; get it.
THUD	Complete story mode on Sick difficulty level
Level: Venice Beach	There is a small smoking tiki-god statue (from the beach) in the back left corner of Hawaii in front of a shop. Ollie into it and hit △.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	✪✪✪✪✪	**51**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	★★★★★	**63**
Top Angler	Xicat	✪✪✪◐	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	✪✪✪◐	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	✪✪✪	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	✪	66
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	✪✪✪◐	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	✪✪✪◐	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	✪✪	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	✪✪	
⑩ **True Crime: Streets of L.A.**	**Activision**	✪✪	**76**

Just enter these while on the Pause menu for the intended effect.

Input	Effect
⬅, ➡, ⬅, ➡, ⊗	All driving upgrades unlocked
⬆, ⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ⊗	All fighting moves unlocked
⬇, ⬇, ⬇, ⊗	Bigger car (must be in car before you enter it on the Pause menu)
⊗, ○, □, △	Shows Nick Kang's current location

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	✪✪✪	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	✪◐	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**SCEA**	✪✪✪✪✪	**47**
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	SCEA	✪✪✪✪	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	✪✪✪	62
UFC Throwdown	Infogrames	✪✪✪◐	58
Unison	Tecmo	✪✪✪◐	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	✪✪	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	✪✪◐	40
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	✪✪✪✪◐	64
Vampire Night	Namco	✪✪◐	52
Vexx	Acclaim	✪✪	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	✪✪✪◐	51
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	✪✪✪✪✪	**55**
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	**Sega**	✪✪✪✪✪	**72**
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	✪✪✪✪◐	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	✪✪✪	74
War Jetz	3DO	✪✪◐	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**64**
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	✪✪◐	74
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	✪✪◐	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	✪◐	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	✪✪✪◐	59
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	✪✪	63
Whiteout	Konami	✪	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	✪✪✪	39
Winback	Koei	✪✪✪✪	43
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	✪✪✪✪◐	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	✪✪✪	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	Dreamcatcher	✪✪✪	57
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	✪✪✪	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	✪✪✪✪	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	✪✪✪✪	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	★★★★★	**67**
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	65
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	★★★★★	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	✪✪	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	✪	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	✪✪◐	68
② **WWE SmackDown!: Here Comes the Pain**	**THQ**	✪✪✪◐	**76**

SECRET AREA In the training/weight room, find the wall that appears to be cracked and Irish Whip your opponent into it. The wall should break away, revealing the secret area.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
WWE SmackDown!: Shut Your Mouth	THQ	✪✪◐	64
WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	**THQ**	✪✪✪◐	**52**
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	✪✪✪✪◐	64
X Squad	EA Games	✪✪✪◐	38
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	✪✪✪	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht	Namco	✪✪✪✪	66
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	✪✪✪✪◐	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	✪✪✪◐	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	✪✪✪◐	49
Yu-Gi-Oh!: The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	✪✪◐	67
Zapper	Infogrames	✪✪◐	64
Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders	Konami	✪✪✪✪◐	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	✪✪✪✪◐	68

REPLAY FORUM

METAL GEAR LOVE: I have a very huge problem on *MGS2: Sons of Liberty*. I'm playing this game on the Hard level, and there is this one part of the game that's really got me stumped. It's the stage where you have to shoot nine of the C-4 semtex bombs on the bridge. I shoot all of the semtex control boxes I see, but the infrared lasers don't get shut down. Can you please help me out and tell me where the one control box I have to destroy is? I just don't see it anywhere in the game (on the Hard level), and it's driving me nuts. Please help me!!!

Orlando
kniknaq98@yahoo.com

Actually, in Hard mode, there are 12 control boxes. Here are their locations:

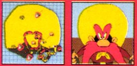
- **Above the door to Strut D**
- **Attached to the orange pump in front of you**
- **Two of them lined up in the stairs right in front of you**
- **Behind the flag (left of Strut G)**
- **On the right-hand ledge near the pigeons**
- **Two near Strug G's doorway—one on either side**
- **Far left side of the bridge, northwest of the second orange pump**
- **On top of the moving Cypher robot**
- **Near a pipe on the bottom of the Strut D balcony**
- **Lower-level bridge (you'll need to tiptoe on the right side of the Strut D balcony and look down)**

PS1 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
007 Racing	EA Games	✪✪✪	41
3Xtreme	989 Studios	✪	21
40 Winks	GT Interactive	✪✪✪✪	28
102 Dalmatians: Puppies to the Rescue	Eidos	✪✪✪◐	41
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	58
A Bug's Life	**Sony CEA**	✪✪	**15**
Ace Combat 2	**Namco**	★★★★★	**1**
Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere	Namco	✪✪✪	31
Aces of the Air	Agetec	◐	64
Action Bass	Take 2	✪✪	37
Action Man: Operation Extreme	Hasbro	✪✪✪	41
Air Hockey	Mud Duck	✪✪✪◐	70
Akuji the Heartless	Crystal Dynamics	✪✪✪	18
Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge	Sony CEA	✪✪	45
Alexi Lalas International Soccer	Rockstar	✪	23
Alien Resurrection	Fox Interactive	✪✪✪	38
All-Star Racing 2	Mud Duck	✪✪✪	71
All-Star Slammin' D-ball	Agetec	✪✪◐	56
Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	✪✪✪✪	47
Alundra	Working Designs	✪✪✪✪◐	4
Alundra 2	Activision	✪✪✪	32
The Amazing Virtual Sea-Monkeys	Conspiracy	✪◐	66
American Pool	Mud Duck	✪	71
Animaniacs Ten Pin Alley	ASC	✪✪✪	17
Animorphs: Shattered Reality	Infogrames	✪✪◐	37
Ape Escape	**Sony CEA**	✪✪✪✪✪	**22**
Apocalypse	Activision	✪✪✪	16
Arc the Lad Collection	Working Designs	✪✪✪✪	52
Arcade Party Pak	Midway	✪✪✪◐	28
Arcade's Greatest Hits: Atari Collection 2	Midway	✪✪◐	7
Arcade's Greatest Hits: Midway Collection 2	Midway	✪✪	4
Armored Core	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	3
Armored Core: Master of Arena	Agetec	✪✪◐	31
Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M.	Acclaim	◐	35
Army Men 3D	**3DO**	✪✪✪	**20**
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	✪✪✪✪	27
Army Men: Air Attack 2	3DO	✪✪✪◐	39
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	✪◐	47
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes	3DO	✪✪	32
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	✪✪◐	40
Army Men: World War	3DO	✪◐	34
Army Men: World War - Final Front	3DO	✪◐	45
Army Men: World War - Land, Sea, Air	3DO	✪◐	39
Arthur! Ready to Race	The Learning Co.	✪	42
Assault	Midway	✪✪✪	15
Asteroids	**Activision**	✪✪✪◐	**16**
Atari Anniversary Edition Redux	Infogrames	✪✪	53
Atlantis: The Lost Empire	SCEA	✪✪✪✪	48
ATV: Quad Power Racing	Acclaim	✪	39
ATV Mania	Gotham Games	✪✪✪✪	73
Austin Powers Pinball	Gotham Games	✪✪	64
Auto Destruct	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪	6
Azure Dreams	Konami	✪✪✪	10
Backstreet Billiards	Ascii	✪✪✪◐	15
Ball Breakers	Take 2	✪✪✪◐	36
Ballistic	Infogrames	✪✪✪✪	27
Baseball 2000	Interplay	✪✪	21
Bass Landing	Agetec	✪✪✪◐	26
Bass Rise	Bandai	✪✪✪	28
Batman & Robin	Acclaim	✪	13
Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker	Ubisoft	◐	39
Batman: Gotham City Racer	Ubisoft	✪◐	46
Battle Hunter	Agetec	✪◐	48
Battletanx: Global Assault	3DO	✪◐	31
Beast Wars	Hasbro	✪◐	5
② **Beyblade**	**Crave**	✪◐	**66**

As if you really want to keep that blade spinning...here's a trick to prolong this agonizing game. Hit ○ + △ (instead of ⊗) when you launch your blade. Whee!

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Big Air	Accolade	✪◐	20
Big Bass Fishing	Take 2	◐	58
Big League Slugger Baseball	Agetec	✪◐	74
Big Ol' Bass 2	Konami	✪✪◐	45
Big Strike Bowling	Gotham Games	✪✪✪◐	68
Billiards	Agetec	✪✪◐	45
Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.	Midway	✪✪	10
Black Bass with Blue Marlin	Hot-B	✪✪	29
Blade	Activision	✪✪◐	41
Blast Lacrosse	Acclaim	✪✪◐	48
Blast Radius	Psygnosis	✪✪✪◐	19
Blaster Master: Blasting Again	Crave	✪✪✪	38
Blasto	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	8



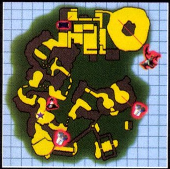
SEPARATED AT BIRTH

Ratchet & Clank's mining area sure looks a lot like one of our favorite Warner Bros. characters.

RATCHET & CLANK: GOING COMMANDO

Platinum Bolt Walkthrough

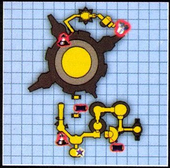
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando *is a straightforward action game that doesn't require you to collect knickknacks to progress. But if collect-a-thons are your thing, you'll find yourself nicely rewarded for finding all of the hidden platinum bolts. Just remember to trade those bolts in for weapon upgrades.*



MEGACORP OUTLET

1) At the first tractor-beam challenge area, use the tractor beam to align the cylinder platforms so you can access the top of the large block/building on the left side. The platinum bolt is on top.

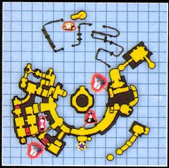
2) After completing all the segments, take the tractor-beam path down to the first grazer you see. (The tractor-beam segment is the one that begins with a large metal frame around it.) Ride this grazer to a small cave—you'll find a platinum bolt inside.



MAKTAR RESORT

1) After the limo takes you to the second leg of the enemy segment, use the ladder to get to the first setup and jump on the raised area to the right (where the crane is). The platinum bolt is on the raised area.

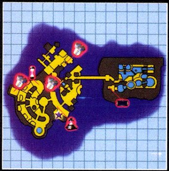
2) You'll find a platform with a platinum bolt to the right of the first jump-pad setup.



MEGAPOLIS

1) From the start, take the right path through the trash-can segment. Once you pass the two hovering platforms, take a left across the gap and continue forward past the entrance to the next room. The platinum bolt is on the ledge below you, facing the center of the city.

2) There is a platinum bolt in the second crane-challenge area behind the raised door. You must move the block below the door and then place the exploding barrel on top of it.



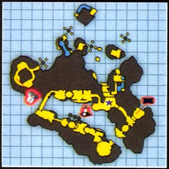
CANAL CITY

1) Along the promenade and before taking the second elevator platform, you'll come to a bridge that leads to the left. Cross the bridge, then take a right and go into the alley along the wall. At the end, there's a breakable wall with an M logo on it. Bust through and jump on the ledge.

2) On the dock segment, there's a dynamo switch that activates a set of doors on the area above. Get to the doors before they close by using long jumps with the jetpack. The platinum bolt is in the room behind the doors.

3) Go left after the first short bridge. Follow the buildings around the edge, where you'll find a little cubbyhole with a platinum bolt.

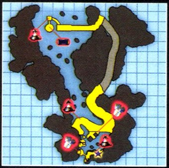
Platinum Bolt	Nanoboost
Transmission	Mod Vendor
Weapons Vendor	Hypnomatic Part B
★ Start Point	Hypnomatic Part



VUKOVAR CANYON

1) After jumping out of the first large water vat, there is a balcony with a large platform carousel in front of you. If you look to the left on the mountain wall, you'll see a ledge. Grab on to the ledge and shimmy your way around to another balcony. Take the swing shots out to another platform carousel and jump down to the cave directly across from you. The platinum bolt is inside the cave, protected by a group of swarmers.

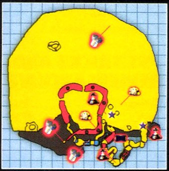
2) In the hovercar race following the water jumps, you'll see an alcove on the left side of the track. The platinum bolt is at the end of this alcove.



FROZEN BASE

1) Before taking the first elevator down, go around the corner, jump off the ledge, and glide down to the first building. From there, jump again and glide over the electric fence. You'll find the platinum bolt behind the building on the right.

2) Drag the tractor-beam platform back to the left and use it to jump onto a platform. Jump from the platform over to a ledge—you'll find a platinum bolt inside the alcove.



MINING AREA

1) At the therminator seesaw puzzle, freeze the side opposite of you and then jump into a small alcove—the bolt is floating on the ceiling.

2) There's a platinum bolt at the end of the first glider segment.

3) You'll find a platinum bolt in the wasteland.

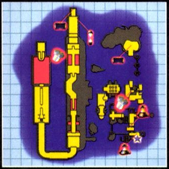
So, what would you do to make a perfect sequel to *Going Commando*? Send your ideas to opm@ziffdavis.com in an email titled "Commando Performance."

TRY THIS!

Use the Sheepinator to create obstructions, then blow away enemies while they're stumbling around.

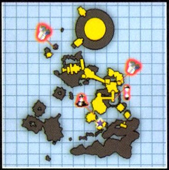
WAIT–THERE'S MORE!

Complete each of the ring challenges at Thug Rendezvous, Deep Space Disposal, and Thugs-4-Less Fleet for three more bolts.



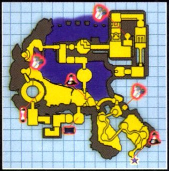
TESTING FACILITY

1) You'll find a platinum bolt behind the closed door behind the second hovertank. You have to use the spiderbot to get into the room on the other side of the building. (There's no bolt here.)
2) Just before the end of the glider challenge, you'll see a platinum bolt high above the surface of the hazardous liquid where the girders form a diamond shape near the ceiling.



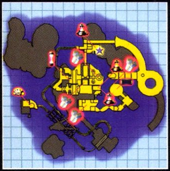
MEGACORP GAMES

1) Halfway through the enemy segment, swing-shot to the right after the bridge and land on a ledge. Fight the enemies and work your way down to a door—the platinum bolt is in this room.
2) Use the levitator and glide to the top of a tall building.



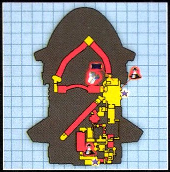
MEGACORP ARMORY

1) Follow the tour guide into a room with a locked door.
2) In the room with the spiderbot, wait for it to open a door, then enter the room and open the next door, which leads to the platinum bolt.
3) In the second tractor-beam room, you can push the two blocks to form steps up to a raised area that leads to a bridge. On the other side, you'll find a tower with a platinum bolt.



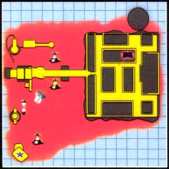
SILVER CITY

1) After the levitator segment, go over the bridge into the next room and take the stairs on the left. Go to your right when you get outside. There is a glass wall with a small hole in the bottom. Use the spiderbot to go through the hole and press the button to open the gate on the other side.
2) Return to the dome room, at which point you're taken to jail. In this room, find the hookshot target and propel yourself to the ledge at the top of the room. The platinum bolt is on this ledge.
3) In the gravity park between the two corkscrews, there's a floating platform with a platinum bolt. Go up the elevator, face the large corkscrew, and glide down toward the first corkscrew.



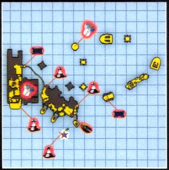
FLYING LAB

1) Jump off the ledge near your ship and glide down to the platform below.



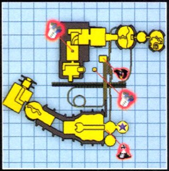
THUGS-4-LESS HQ

1) At the start of the bridge, there is a dynamo-platform challenge that takes you to the top of a structure with a small room—you'll find the platinum bolt here.



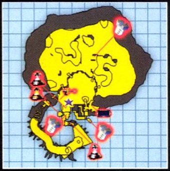
DISTRIBUTION FACILITY

1) On the giant ship with the crates, there is a section where you can wall-kick between two stacks of crates to get up on top. Once up here, long jump across the gap—you'll find the platinum bolt in an alcove around the corner.
2) Use the levitator to get up to one of the fan platforms.



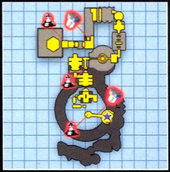
ALLGON CITY

1) In the bank, freeze the pool of water with the Therminator, which also freezes the fountain going outside the building. Then break the glass and grind down to the platinum bolt.
2) After the bank where you find the ziggaraut, hypnotize one of the robots on top of the ziggaraut with the Hypnomatic. Then have him step on a button on top of the ziggaraut. This opens a door in the ziggaraut where you'll get a platinum bolt.



TUNDOR WASTES

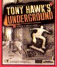
1) A platinum bolt is located in the wasteland.
2) After completing the second leg of the hypnobot challenge, you're required to swim through a water traversal. At the end of this, swim down and make a U-turn to the right where you'll be able to swim up through a hidden tunnel. There is a platinum bolt stashed on a platform just outside the water.
3) In the enemy segment, if you return with the Hypnotizer, there is a hypnobot beyond a gate in the second room. The hypnobot will need to take out some Yetis and then press a button that will allow you to enter and climb a ladder. You'll find a platinum bolt stashed here.



PROTOPET FACTORY

1) You'll find a platinum bolt at the end of the grind rail.
2) Grind up the right side of the first bridge and jump at the apex to grab a platinum bolt.

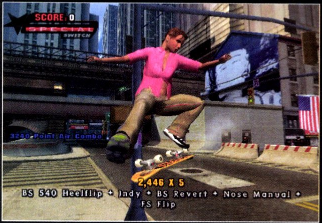
Living the thug life.



All the trick-tastic help for *THUG* was provided by the Brady Games guide.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Your trick construction center



SPECIAL AIR TRICKS

Trick	Points	
	Normal	Switch
Kickflip	100	120
Double Kickflip	500	600
Triple Kickflip	1000	1200
1-2-3-4	1400	1680
360 Varial McTwist	5000	6000
540 Flip	1450	1740
540 Tailwhip	2000	2400
360 Varial Heelflip Lien	1500	1800
Barrel Roll	5000	6000
Back Spin Air	3000	3600
Double Kickflip Varial Indy	1100	1320
Fingerflip Airwalk	1500	1800
Rodeo Wrap	1600	1920
FS 540	4500	5400
Gazelle Underflip	3500	4200
360 Ghetto Bird	3500	4200
Hardflip Late Flip	1500	1800
Indy 900	11000	13200
The Jackass	1500	1800
Kickflip Backflip	3000	3600
Kickflip Underflip	1000	1200
McTwist	5000	6000
Nollie Flip Underflip	1050	1260
Quad Heelflip	1200	1440
Semi Flip	1450	1740
The 900	9000	10800

SPECIAL LIP TRICKS

1990 Invert	3500+	4200+
Heelflip FS Invert	3200+	3840+
Ho Ho Sad Plant	3500+	4200+
Russian Boneless	3000+	3600+

SPECIAL GRAB TRICKS

Double Kickflip Madonna	1750	2100
Casper Flip 360 Flip	2500	3000
Assume the Position II	1000	1200
Bam Bend Air	1300	1560
BigSpin Shifty	1500	1800
Chomp On This	1000	1200
Flamingo	1500	1800
Flying Squirrel	1500	1800
360 Flip Tail Grab	1600	1920
Samba Flip	1400	1680
Shifty Shifty	2000	2400
Sit Down Air	1200	1440

SPECIAL MANUAL TRICKS

Trick	Points
Ahhh Yeahh!	4000+
Casper Handstand	2250+
Head Balancer	3100+
Ho Ho Street Plant	2750+
Flip 2 Switch	3000+
Mix it Up	3000+
Muska Manual	3100+
No Comply 360 Shove-It	2400+
One Wheel Nose Manual	2325+
Primo	2500+
Reemo Slide	3200+
Rusty Slide Manual	2300+
Slam Spinner	3500+
Sproing	3150+
Yeah Right	3100+

SPECIAL GRIND TRICKS

360 Shove-It Nosegrind	800+
5-0 Fingerflip Nosegrind	500+
American Tribute	500+
Big Hitter II	500+
Coffin	500+
Crook BigSpinFlip Crook	500+
Skull Grind	800+
Daffy Grind	500+
Elbow Smash	500+
Fandangle	500+
5050 Switcheroo	400+
Flip Kick Dad	500+
Nollie 360 Flip Crook	800+
Dry Heaves	400+
Faction Guitar Slide	500+
Crooks Darkslide	800+
Moonwalk Five-0	800+
One Foot Darkslide	800+
One Foot Smith	500+
Primo Handstand	800+
Rodney Primo	400+
Rowley Darkslide	500+
Darkslide Handstand	800+
Stupid Grind	400+
Ghetto Tag Grind	500+
Tailblock Slide	500+
Levitate Grind	800+
Yeah Right Slide	400+

Customization! The commands for Lip Tricks, Flips, Grabs, and special tricks can all be customized to fit the player's preference. So instead of a command list, we'll help you craft tricks that'll score megapoints.

Special Tricks

When it comes to scoring big points with a single trick, look no further than the collection of special tricks. Assign and use any of these multiple-command tricks—provided the Special meter is glowing bright red. Earn additional special trick slots throughout the story mode to bring the total for the game to 11! Use the additional slots to assign any of these highly technical tricks for use at a later time.

Fast Tricks

Although all of the special tricks are elaborate and make good additions to any scoring line, some Air Tricks are performed at a faster speed than others. These high-speed tricks (colored red) can be used more often during lengthy scoring lines, without the larger risk of bailing. Be sure to read the Special Trick Management section for additional tips on making the most out of the special tricks.

Special Trick Management

Newcomers to the series may feel overwhelmed when trying to select a small handful of tricks from the list of nearly 100 special tricks that are available. Furthermore, the whole issue of remembering the commands for each of them can be somewhat difficult as well. If you fall into this category, or just want some extra pointers, continue reading. This section is going to break down the ins and outs of choosing special tricks that make million-point scoring lines as common as a Rail Hop gap.

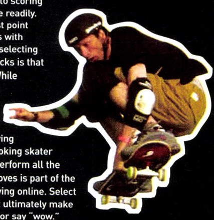
Players should develop their own styles of gameplay, but for those still seeking a style, it is recommended to always have at least two special Grinds and a special Manual assigned to the special trick slots. Once more spots become available, work on giving each type of trick equal representation, as this allows for a much greater balance. Consider mimicking the following setup once all 11 special trick slots have been made available: three special Grinds, two special Manuals, two special Lip Tricks, two slow special Airs, and two fast special Airs.

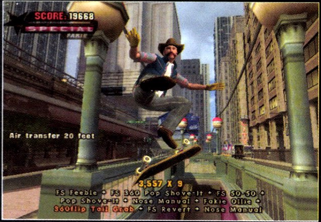
What to consider when selecting these tricks is discussed in a moment. First, the issue of remembering all the various commands needs to be addressed. A very user-friendly method of keeping 11 special tricks straight is to use the Up, Down and Down, Up directional commands for 10 of the 11 tricks. Assign the special Manuals, special Lip Tricks and two of the special Grinds to the Up, Down + Grind button and Down, Up + Grind button commands. Assign the two fast special Airs to the Up, Down + Flip button and Down, Up + Flip button commands and do the same for the slower special Airs, but with the Grab button. Organizing the special tricks in this manner makes it harder to forget a command and also makes remembering to alternate between tricks somewhat easier.

Now that you know what commands to use and how many tricks of what type to select, the time has come to pick some tricks. Although this decision should be based on personal taste, it's a decision that can be changed at any time by entering the Edit Tricks menu. There are essentially three things to consider when selecting special tricks: 1) the point value, 2) whether or not the trick is easy to land, and 3) whether or not you think it's cool.

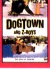
Judging by point values is an excellent way to decide which special Manuals, Grinds, and Lip Tricks to select, but it becomes a bit less reliable with special Air Tricks. The reason for this is because some of the higher-scoring tricks are just too hard to land consistently. For example, the Indy 900 is a very valuable trick, but it's very difficult to land without maximum speed, and even then, it's still hard to land while performing any sort of ramp-to-ramp transfer or gap. On the other hand, some tricks, such as the Kickflip Underflip, don't offer nearly as many points, but they can be incorporated into a lengthy scoring line more easily. Take note of the tricks colored red in the Special Air Tricks table, as those are the ones that are performed at a faster rate and can be worked into scoring lines more readily.

The last point to address with regard to selecting special tricks is that of style. While it may not matter during story mode, having a fresh-looking skater who can perform all the coolest moves is part of the fun of playing online. Select tricks that ultimately make you smile or say "wow." After all, this is for fun, enjoy yourself!




SCORE: 19668
SPECIAL
FAKIE
Air transfer 20 feet
3,557 X 9
FS Feeble + FS 360 Pop Shove-It + FS 50-50 + Pop Shove-It + Nose Manual + Fakie Ollie + 360flip Tail Grab + FS Revert + Nose Manual

Can you score 4 million points in a single trick? Write to opm@ziffdavis.com and tell us about your best *THUG* trick.



www.sonyclassics.com/dogtown
For a little over $20, you can snag this damn fine documentary, directed by *THUG* star Stacy Peralta.

1897 The year that Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was first published.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Blockids	Natsume	★★½	69
Bloody Roar	Sony CEA	★★★½	6
Bloody Roar 2	Sony CEA	★★★★	21
Blues Big Musical	THQ	★★★	46
Board Game: Top Shop	Agetec	★★★★	45
Bomberman Fantasy Race	Atlus	★★½	19
Bomberman Party Edition	Vatical	★★½	38
Bomberman World	Atlus	★★½	13
The Bombing Islands	Kemco	★★½	47
Boombots	SouthPeak	★★½	27
Bottom of the 9th '97	Konami	★★★½	1
Bowling	Agetec	★★	43
Boxing	Agetec	★★★	45
Bratz	Ubi Soft	n/a	n/a
Brave Fencer Musashi	Square EA	★★★★	15
Bravo Air Race	THQ	★★★	1
Breakout	Hasbro	★★	39
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	★★★½	9
Breath of Fire IV	Capcom	★★★½	40
Brigandine	Atlus	★★★½	15
Broken Sword	THQ	★★★★	5
Broken Sword II	Crave	★★★½	27
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	THQ	★★★½	13
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling 2	THQ	★★★★	31
Bug Riders	GT Interactive	★★	3
Bugs Bunny & Taz: Time Busters	Infogrames	★★★	41
Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time	Infogrames	★★★½	23
Builder's Block	Jaleco	★★★½	35
Burstrick Wake Boarding!!	Natsume	★½	45
Bushido Blade 2	Square EA	★★★½	14
Bust A Groove	989 Studios	★★★★	16
Bust A Groove 2	Enix	★★★	36
Bust-A-Move 4	Natsume	★★★★	17
Bust-A-Move 99	Acclaim	★★	19
Buzz Lightyear of Star Command	Activision	★★½	39
C: The Contra Adventure	Konami	★½	12
c-12: Final Resistance	Sony CEA	★★½	58
Caesar's Palace 2000	Interplay	½	41
Caesar's Palace II	Interplay	★★	15
Capcom vs. SNK Pro	Capcom	★★★½	60
Card Games	Agetec	★½	50
Cardinal SYN	Sony CEA	★★★	9
CART World Series	Sony CEA	★★★½	3
Casper: Friends Around the World	Sound Source	★½	41
Castlevania Chronicles	Konami	★★★½	50
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	**Konami**	★★★★★	**2**
Castrol Honda Superbike	Electronic Arts	★★	21
Centipede	Hasbro	★	22
Championship Bass	EA Sports	★★★★	33
Championship Motocross 2001 Feat. Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★	41
Championship Motocross Feat. Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★½	25
Championship Surfer	Mattel	★★★	41
Chessmaster II	Mindscape	★★★½	23
Chicken Run	Eidos	★★★	41
Chocobo Racing	Square EA	★★★	23
Chocobo's Dungeon 2	Square EA	★★½	29
Chrono Cross	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**36**
Circuit Breakers	Mindscape	★★★	12
Civilization II	Activision	★★★★½	18
Cleopatra's Fortune	Mud Duck	★★½	71
Clock Tower	Ascii	★★★	2
Clock Tower II: The Struggle Within	Agetec	★★½	28
Colin McRae 2.0	**Codemasters**	★★★★★	**40**
Colin McRae Rally	Sony CEA	★★★★	30
Colony Wars	**Psygnosis**	★★★★★	**4**
Colony Wars: Red Sun	Psygnosis	★★★★½	31
Colony Wars: Vengeance	Psygnosis	★★★½	14
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	Virgin	★★★½	4
Contender	Sony CEA	★★★★	17
Contender 2	Bam	★	41
Cool Boarders 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**3**
Cool Boarders 3	**989 Studios**	★★★	**14**
Cool Boarders 4	**989 Studios**	★★★	**27**
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	★	39

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Countdown Vampires	Bandai	★½	32
Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn	Activision	★★½	34
Crash Bandicoot 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**3**
Crash Bandicoot: WARPED	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**15**
Crash Bash	SCEA/Universal	★★½	39
Crime Killer	Interplay	★★★	12
Critical Depth	GT Interactive	★★★	3
Croc	**Fox Interactive**	★★★★	**1**
Croc 2	Fox Interactive	★★½	22
Crossroad Crisis	Agetec	★½	50
Crusaders of Might & Magic	3DO	★★★	30
CTR: Crash Team Racing	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**26**
CyberTiger	EA Sports	★★★★	27
Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	★★★★	42
Dance Dance Revolution: Disney Mix	Konami	★★★★	49
Dance Dance Revolution: Konamix	Konami	★★★★	57
Danger Girl	THQ	★★½	39
Dark Omen	Electronic Arts	★★	9
DarkStalkers 3	Capcom	★★★★	16
Darkstone	Take 2	★★★½	43
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	Acclaim	★★★½	38
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix	Acclaim	★★½	47
David Beckham Soccer	Majesco	★★★	61
Dead in the Water	ASC	★★½	17
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	★★★★½	8
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	★★½	9
Deception III: Dark Delusion	Tecmo	★★★★	31
Delta Force: Urban Warfare	Novalogic	★★★	61
Demolition Racer	Infogrames	★★★★	26
Destrega	Koei	★★★★	16
Destruction Derby Raw	Midway	★★★★	39
Devil Dice	THQ	★★★½	13
Dexter's Laboratory: Mandark's Lab?	Bam	★★★½	59
Diablo	Electronic Arts	★★★★	8
Die Hard Trilogy: Viva Las Vegas	Fox Interactive	★★	31
Digimon Digital Card Battle	Bandai	★★★	48
Digimon Rumble Arena	Bandai	★★★½	55
Digimon World	Bandai	★½	36
Digimon World 2	Bandai	★★	46
Digimon World 3	Bandai	★★½	57
Dino Crisis	Capcom	★★★★	25
Dino Crisis 2	Capcom	★★★★½	38
Dirt Jockey	Mastiff	★★	71
Disney's Dinosaur	Ubi Soft	★½	36
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	★★½	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft	★★★	39
Downhill Mountain Bike Racing	Activision	★★½	27
Dracula: The Last Sanctuary	DreamCatcher	★★½	56
Dracula: The Resurrection	DreamCatcher	★★½	48
Dragon Ball GT	Bandai	★★	4
Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22	Infogrames	★	69
Dragon Tales: Dragon Seek	NewKidCo	★½	45
Dragon Valor	Namco	★★★	38
Dragon Warrior VII	Enix	★★★★½	51
Dragonseeds	Jaleco	★★	15
Driver	**GT Interactive**	★★★★	**24**
Driver 2	Infogrames	★★★★	40
Ducati World Championship Racing	Acclaim	★★½	41
Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes	Infogrames	★★½	40
Duke Nukem: Time to Kill	**GT Interactive**	★★★½	**14**
Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown	GT Interactive	★★★	5
Dukes of Hazzard	**SouthPeak**	★½	**29**
Dukes of Hazzard II: Daisy Dukes it Out	SouthPeak	★★	41
Dune 2000	Electronic Arts	★½	27
EA Sports Supercross	EA Sports	★★★½	41
Eagle One: Harrier Attack	Infogrames	★★★	32
Echo Night	Agetec	★★★	23
ECW Anarchy Rulz	Acclaim	★	38
ECW Hardcore Revolution	Acclaim	★½	30
Ehrgeiz	Square EA	★★★½	21
Einhänder	Sony CEA	★★★★	8
Elemental Gearbolt	Working Designs	★★★★	11
Eliminator	Psygnosis	★½	20
The Emperor's New Groove	SCEA	★★★½	40

REPLAY FORUM

JAK II CORRECTION: In Issue #75, you guys ran a tip section for *Jak II*. I just beat the game (which is the most fun I've had with a game since *MGS2*, by the way), and I found a much easier way to get the seal piece out of the water slums. Simply hop on your hover-board and ride past everything. The key is never to stop or slow down; this way the guards don't have time to get off the transports. You'll simply go right underneath them. Took me two tries to beat. That's all.

Tim Morris
funegeye06@hotmail.com

LASTLEVANIA: I've finished *Castlevania: LOI* and fought the three elementals, but I hear there's another hidden boss!!! Can you help a Belmont out?

Abe Stoker
Philadelphia, PA

Well, first go back to the Pagoda of the Misty Moon. Remember that dark room with the platforms? Well, get there and jump your way to the other side (where the Black Solar Plate is). Then instead of going back, jump to the right, then forward, and then right again. You'll jump onto a hidden block (it might take a while to find it). Jump to another hidden block and then go into a secret room with the Unlock Jewel. Go back to the Transport Room, head down the tower, save, and use the Unlock Jewel. Good luck with the Forgotten One!

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Equestrian Showcase	Mud Duck	★★	71
ESPN MLS GameNight	Konami	★★★	40
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial: Interplanetary Mission	NewKidCo	½	54
Eternal Eyes	Crave	★½	38
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ	★★½	41
Evil Zone	Titus	★★★	25
Expendable	Infogrames	★½	34
F1 2000	EA Sports	★★★½	33
F1 Championship Season	EA Sports	★★★½	40
F1 Racing Championship	Ubi Soft	★★½	39
Family Feud	Hasbro	★★★	39
Family Game Pack	3DO	★★½	33
Fantastic Four	Acclaim	★★	3
Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition	SNK	★½	30
Fear Effect	Eidos	★★★★½	31
Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix	Eidos	★★★★½	43
Felony 11-79	Ascii	★★★	1
FIFA 98	EA Sports	★★★½	4
FIFA 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	17
FIFA 2000	EA Sports	★★★★½	27
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	★★★★½	39
FIFA Soccer 2003	EA Sports	★★★½	63
The Fifth Element	Activision	½	15
Fighter Maker	Agetec	★★★½	21
Fighting Force	**Eidos**	★★★	**3**
Fighting Force 2	Eidos	★★	29
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	★★★★½	26
Final Fantasy Chronicles	Square EA	★★★★	47
Final Fantasy Origins	Square Enix	★★★½	67
❶ **Final Fantasy Tactics**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**5**

UNLOCK CLOUD STRIFE Wait until you're almost at the end of chapter four (or at least until after you battle Zodiac Demon Adramelk in Igros Castle). Give the Cancer Stone to Goug, and Cloud will join your reality, but run off. Next, make your way back to Zirghidas Trade City. You'll soon rescue Cloud from some thieves; you should then go to Bervenia Volcano to retrieve his Materia Blade.

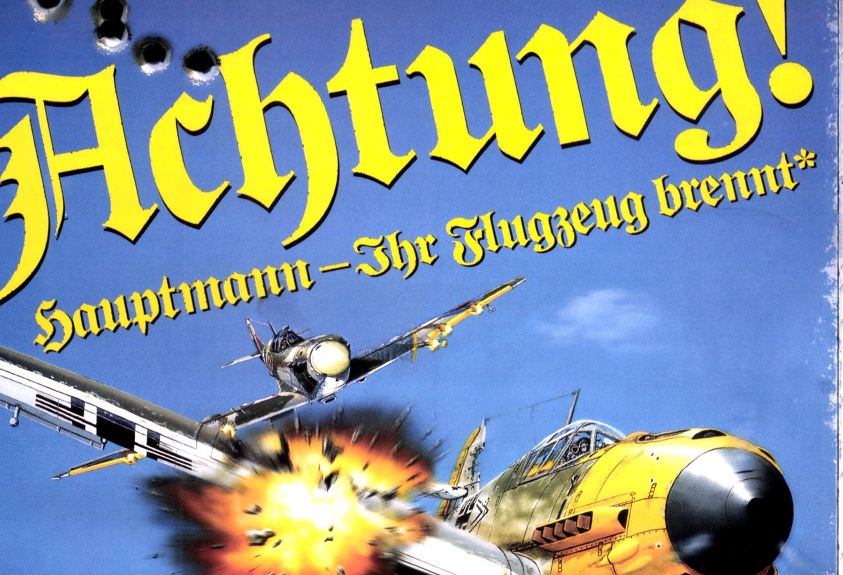
GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Final Fantasy VII	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**1**
❺ **Final Fantasy VIII**	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**25**

ALTERNATE SCENE This happens in the Dollet SeeD mission. After fighting Elvoret, Biggs will send the "Black Widow," or X-ATM092, after you. If you actually kill it (i.e. inflict more than 5,000 HP of damage), you get a different cut-scene at Dollet beach afterwards.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
❹ **Final Fantasy IX**	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**39**

BLACKJACK EASTER EGG Just input this code once you get to the End screen after everything : R2, L1, R2, R2, Up, ⊗, ➡, ◯, ⬇, △, L2, R1, R2, L1, □, □. At the second press of the □ button, you should hear a sound as if you're using an item. Now press Start and you'll be able to play Blackjack at your leisure.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Fisherman's Bait	Konami	★★★½	18
Fisherman's Bait 2: Big Ol' Bass	Konami	★★★	27
Flintstones Bedrock Bowling	SouthPeak	★	37
Ford Truck Mania	Gotham Games	★★	75
Ford Racing	Empire	★★½	44
Formula 1 '98	**Psygnosis**	★★★★	**15**
Formula 1 '99	Psygnosis	★★★½	28
Forsaken	Acclaim	★★★★	10
Fox Sports Golf '99	Fox Interactive	★★	11
Fox Sports Soccer '99	Fox Interactive	★★½	11
Freestyle Boardin' '99	Capcom	★★½	18
Freestyle Motocross: McGrath vs. Pastrana	Acclaim	★★½	40
Frogger	**Hasbro**	★★½	**4**
Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	Hasbro	★★★	38
Front Mission 3	Square EA	★★★★½	31
Future Cop L.A.P.D.	Electronic Arts	★★★	13
G-Police	Psygnosis	★★★★½	3
G-Police 2	Psygnosis	★★★★	25
G-Darius	THQ	★★★★	13
Galaga: Destination Earth	Hasbro	★★½	39
Galerians	Crave	★★★	33
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	★★½	28
Gauntlet Legends	Midway	★★½	32
Gekido	Interplay	★★★	34
Gekioh: Shooting King	Natsume	★★★½	67
Gex: Deep Cover Gecko	Eidos	★★★½	20



*(Translation: Hey, Captain! Your airplane's on fire.)

The fortunes of German pilots everywhere are about to take a severe downturn. In this intense WWII flight-action game, from Secret Weapons of Luftwaffe®, TIE-Fighter®, and X-Wing® creator Lawrence Holland, you'll join a secret, elite fighter squadron. Your mission: thwart the most insidious plans of the Third Reich. Over Europe and other theaters, you'll pilot nearly two dozen authentic aircraft, and face over 30 air-to-air and air-to-ground combat scenarios. And you won't need any flight training. Just nerves of steel, a steady hand, and a burning desire to rid the world of tyranny, one mission at a time.

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THE REAL DANTE
Unlike the "cool Dante," Dante Alighieri didn't figh
demons in hell, he merely wrote about it

READER REVIEWS

Jaking into Freedom with Dante

We want your reviews of the best and worst games, so write a review and send it to opm@ziffdavis.com. We can't publish everyone's, so keep it short, be witty, and remember that not every game deserves a 5-star rating just because you like it!

JAK II

What you said: "*Jak II's* greatest strength lies in its incredible diversity. Not because each element is so well defined, but rather because it all forms a cohesive experience far greater than the mere sum of its parts.

And while the inclusion of weaponry and nonlinearity isn't exactly revolutionary, the way it's executed is. The typical family-oriented narrative has also been revolutionized—it's now infused with multitiered, mature, intelligent themes, another first for the genre.

Still, this game isn't without its flaws. The overly narrow and viciously curvaceous streets of Haven City are a minor problem, remedied only through prolonged play. *Jak II* is also challenging, and occasionally quite hard. The game demands that you improve your skills and closely scrutinize how to perform tasks more efficiently.

Despite these minute imperfections, *Jak II* stands atop all 3D platformers as the vision of what should be, and what will be, the future of the genre."

Your Score ★★★★★

Ryan "Ryosei" McCarthy
ryan_mccarthy70@hotmail.com

What we said: "*Jak II* represents what could have been a defining moment for 3D platformers."

"…it isn't proper to expect us to be perfect in order to make up for your game's many imbalances."

Our Score ★★★½

> **"*Jak II* stands atop all 3D platformers as the vision of what should be, and what will be, the future of the genre."**

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

What you said: "*Freedom Fighters* is the most fun I've had in a long while. I can count on my fingers how many games have grabbed me, been an enjoyable experience to play, and been one of the best videogames I've ever played. *Freedom Fighters* is one of those games. The multiplayer is a blast, and it's hilarious (especially when you shoot people off platforms). One of the bad parts (not many of those) of the game is that you can get totally lost. The city is huge, with small alleyways and plenty of hiding spots. Regardless of these faults, this is a must-buy."

Your Score ★★★★★

Kyle Dawkins
TheRealist720@aol.com

What we said: "I haven't even talked about the nonlinear gameplay, the spectacular graphics, the rock-solid controls, the amazing physics (especially the rag-doll death animations—*wow*), the great variety of missions and settings, the solid voice acting, the awesome orchestral soundtrack, or the exceptional multiplayer (no online, though, sadly)."

Our Score ★★★★★

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

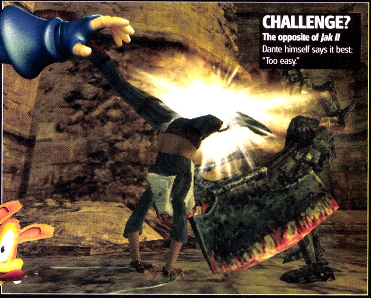
What you said: "The biggest problem with this game, you ask? It's too darn easy. While Dante is one of the baddest badasses on PS2, I still expect to encounter a challenge or two when I fire up a game. I didn't find that here. What little story line exists is poorly put together and seems more of an afterthought than anything else. Furthermore, the addition of a second playable character also seems rushed. Lucia's story is almost identical to Dante's, aside from two things: It's even shorter, and it has only one area that is exclusive to Lucia. Don't get me wrong, I did have a lot of fun with this game. The new fighting animations are spot on and the action is fast. The control setup is also much improved from the first *Devil May Cry*; I just wish I could say the same thing about the camera. If you must play this game, I'd suggest renting it—or wait until it's released as a Greatest Hits title."

Your Score ★★★

Cathy Lord
irishmalt76@hotmail.com

What we said: "Although the follow-up to the coolest game ever made does have enough pluses to warrant a positive score, its setbacks make me want to cry."

Our Score ★★★



CHALLENGE?
The opposite of *Jak II*
Dante himself says it best: "Too easy."

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Gex: Enter the Gecko	Midway	★★★½	7
Ghost in the Shell	THQ	★★★★	4
Glover	Hasbro	★★	28
Gold and Glory: The Road to El Dorado	Sony CEA	★★	42
Gran Turismo	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**9**
Gran Turismo 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**29**
Grand Theft Auto	**Take 2**	★★½	**10**
Grand Theft Auto 2	Rockstar	★★★	27
Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Rockstar	★★½	22
Grand Tour Racing '98	Activision	★★★	1
Grandia	Sony CEA	★★★★½	26
Granstream Saga	THQ	★★★	10
The Grinch	Konami/Universal	★½	39
Grind Session	Sony CEA	★★★★	34
Grudge Warriors	Take 2	★★	34
Guardian's Crusade	Activision	★★★	19
Gubble	Mud Duck	½	68
Gundam Battle Assault 2	Bandai	★★★★	62
Gunfighter: The Legend of Jesse James	Ubi Soft	★★½	52
HardBall '99	Accolade	★½	15
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	★★★	53
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	★★★	64
Harvest Moon: Back to Nature	Natsume	★★★½	40
HBO Boxing	Acclaim	★★	41
Heart of Darkness	Interplay	★★★★	13
Hellboy: Asylum Seeker	Dreamcatcher	½	73
Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy	NewKidCo	★★½	20
Herc's Adventures	LucasArts	★★★	2
High Heat Baseball 2000	3DO	★	22
High Heat Major League Baseball 2002	3DO	★★★★	43
Hogs of War	Infogrames	★★★★	38
Hooters Road Trip	Ubi Soft	½	55
Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth	Atlus	★★½	53
Hot Shots Golf	Sony CEA	★★★★	7
Hot Shots Golf 2	Sony CEA	★★★½	30
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	**Electronic Arts**	★★½	**25**
Hydro Thunder	Midway	★★	31
IHRA Drag Racing	Bethesda	½	53
In Cold Blood	DreamCatcher	★★	49
Incredible Crisis	Titus	★★★½	38
Inspector Gadget: Gadget's Crazy Maze	Ubi Soft	★★★½	50
Intelligent Qube	Sony CEA	★★★	2
Intellivision Classic Games	Activision	★½	28
Int'l. Superstar Soccer 98	Konami	★★★★½	11
Int'l. Track & Field 2000	Konami	★★★★	27
InuYasha	Bandai	★★★	68
Invasion From Beyond	GT Interactive	★★	19
Iron Soldier 3	Vatical	★★★★	35
Irritating Stick	Jaleco	★★★	18
ISS Pro Evolution	Konami	★★★★½	35
The Italian Job	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**57**
Jackie Chan Stuntmaster	Midway	★★★½	30
Jade Cocoon	Crave	★★★½	23
Jarrett & LaBonte Stock Car Racing	Codemasters	★★★★	38
Jeopardy!	Hasbro	★★★★	17
Jeopardy! 2	Hasbro	★★★★	29
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000	**Acclaim**	★½	**38**
Jersey Devil	Sony CEA	★★	10
Jet Moto 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★½	**3**
Jet Moto 3	989 Studios	★★★½	26
Jigsaw Madness	XS Games	★★	70
Jimmy Johnson VR Football	Interplay	★★	2
Jojo's Bizarre Adventure	Capcom	★★★★½	31
Juggernaut	Jaleco	★★	26
K-1 Grand Prix	Jaleco	★★★½	28
K-1 Revenge	Jaleco	★★½	18
Kagero: Deception II	Tecmo	★★★★½	14
Kartia	Atlus	★★★★	12
Kensei Sacred Fist	Konami	★½	17
Kickboxing	Agetec	★	58
Killer Loop	Crave	★★★	27
King of Fighters 99	Agetec	★★★★	41
KISS Pinball	Take 2	★½	46
Klonoa	**Namco**	★★★★★	**6**

OVERHEAD
"Maybe she'd like 'H.W.C.'" —Liz Phair naming the one song on her recent self-titled album that Ms. Pac-Man might like.

✪✪✪✪✪ Rating for *Parappa the Rapper*, the best musical game ever.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Knockout Kings	EA Sports	✪✪✪◐	16
Knockout Kings 2000	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	27
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	39
Konami Arcade Classics	Konami	✪✪◐	23
Koudelka	Infogrames	✪✪✪	35
Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed	Midway	✪✪✪	34
The Land Before Time: Great Valley Racing	TDK Mediactive	✪✪✪	46
The Land Before Time: Return to Great Valley	Sound Source	✪✪◐	39
Largo Winch .//Commando Sar	Ubi Soft	◐	57
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	**Eidos**	✪✪✪✪◐	**25**
The Legend of Dragoon	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪◐	34
Legend of Legaia	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	19
Legend of Mana	Square EA	✪✪◐	35
Lego Island 2: The Brickster's Revenge	Lego Media	✪✪◐	46
Lego Rock Raiders	Lego Media	✪	37
Lilo & Stitch	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	59
The Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure	Activision	✪◐	42
The Little Mermaid II	THQ	✪✪✪✪	39
Lode Runner	Natsume	✪✪◐	4
Looney Tunes Racing	Infogrames	✪✪◐	39
Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider	Infogrames	✪✪◐	51
The Lost World: Jurassic Park	**Electronic Arts**	✪	**2**
Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete	Working Designs	✪✪✪✪◐	22
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	Working Designs	✪✪✪✪	40
Madden NFL 98	**EA Sports**	✪✪✪✪	**2**
Madden NFL 99	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪◐	13
Madden NFL 2000	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**25**
Madden NFL 2001	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**37**
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪◐	49
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	62
Madden NFL 2004	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	74
Marble Master	Conspiracy	✪✪◐	69
Martian Gothic: Unification	Take 2	✪✪✪◐	52
Marvel Super Heroes	Capcom	✪✪	2
Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter	Capcom	✪✪✪◐	18
Marvel vs. Capcom EX	Capcom	✪✪◐	30
Mary-Kate and Ashley: Magical Mystery Mall	Acclaim	✪✪✪◐	40
Mary-Kate and Ashley: Winner's Circle	Acclaim	✪✪◐	45
Mass Destruction	ASC	✪✪◐	3
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	✪✪✪✪	45
Maximum Force	Midway	✪◐	2
MDK	Playmates	✪✪◐	3
Medal Of Honor	**Electronic Arts**	✪✪✪✪	**27**
Medal Of Honor Underground	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪✪	39
MediEvil	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	14
MediEvil II	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	32
Mega Man Legends	Capcom	✪✪✪✪	12
Mega Man Legends 2	Capcom	✪✪✪◐	39
Mega Man X4	Capcom	✪✪✪	4
Mega Man X5	Capcom	✪✪✪◐	41
Mega Man X6	Capcom	✪✪✪	53
Men in Black–The Series: Crashdown	Infogrames	✪✪✪	54
Metal Gear Solid	**Konami**	✪✪✪✪✪	**14**
Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions	Konami	✪✪✪✪	25
Metal Slug X	Agetec	✪✪✪✪	43
Micro Machines	**Midway**	★★★★★	**5**
Micro Maniacs	Codemasters	✪✪✪✪	32
Mike Tyson Boxing	Codemasters	✪✪	39
Miracle Space Race	Mud Duck	✪	71
The Misadventures of Tron Bonne	Capcom	✪✪✪✪	31
Miss Spider's Tea Party	Simon & Schuster	✪✪✪	41
Missile Command	Hasbro	✪✪✪	28
Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	✪✪	28
MK Mythologies	Midway	✪✪◐	3
MLB 98	Sony CEA	✪✪✪	1
MLB 99	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	9
MLB 2000	989 Studios	✪✪✪✪	21
MLB 2001	989 Studios	✪✪✪	33
MLB 2002	Sony CEA	✪✪	46
MLB 2003	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	60
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪◐	70
MLB Bottom of the 9th 99	Konami	✪✪✪◐	12
Mobil 1: Rally Championship	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪	32
Mobile Armor	Agetec	✪	70

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Mobile Light Force	XS Games	✪✪✪◐	69
Monaco Grand Prix	Ubi Soft	✪✪✪◐	21
Monkey Hero	Take 2	✪✪	18
Monkey Magic	Sunsoft	✪	29
Monopoly	**Hasbro**	✪✪✪	**5**
Monster Bass!	XS Games	✪✪	70
Monster Rancher 2	Tecmo	✪✪✪✪	26
Monster Rancher Battle Card: Episode II	Tecmo	✪✪✪◐	36
Monster Rancher Hop-A-Bout	Tecmo	✪✪✪◐	41
Monster Seed	Sunsoft	✪✪◐	20
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	51
Mort the Chicken	Crave	✪◐	41
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces	Midway	✪◐	36
Mortal Kombat 4	**Midway**	✪✪✪◐	**11**
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Midway	n/a	n/a
Moto Racer	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★★	**3**
Moto Racer 2	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪✪◐	14
Moto Racer World Tour	Infogrames	✪✪✪✪	40
Motocross Mania	Take 2	✪	48
Motocross Mania 2	Gotham Games	✪✪◐	72
Motorhead	Fox Interactive	✪✪✪◐	14
Mr. Domino	Acclaim	✪✪✪◐	15
Mr. Driller	Namco	✪✪✪✪	33
❸ **Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness**	**Namco**	✪✪✪✪	**38**

EXTRA MULTIPLAYER MAP Reach the Pier Pressure bonus round (after Year of the Pac) and get a score of 50,000 or more. A message at the results screen will confirm that a new map has been unlocked. Save the game if you have a memory pak (if not, select "Quit Game"). Quit the game and go to the Multiplayer option in the Main menu. You should have a new place to battle a friend.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
MTV Music Generator	Codemasters	✪✪✪✪	28
MTV Sports: Pure Ride	THQ	✪✪✪◐	39
MTV Sports: Skateboarding Feat. Andy MacDonald	THQ	✪	39
MTV Sports: Snowboarding	THQ	✪✪✪◐	27
MTV Sports: T.J. Lavin's Ultimate BMX	THQ	✪✪	45
The Mummy	Konami	✪✪✪	41
Muppet Monster Adventure	Midway	✪✪✪✪	39
Muppet Race Mania	Midway	✪✪✪◐	39
My Disney Kitchen	Bam	n/a	n/a
N.GEN Racing	Infogrames	✪✪◐	35
N20	Fox Interactive	✪✪	11
Nagano Winter Olympics 98	Konami	✪✪	6
Namco Museum Vol. 3	Namco	n/a	n/a
NASCAR 98	**EA Sports**	✪✪✪✪	**3**
NASCAR 99	**EA Sports**	✪✪✪✪	**14**
NASCAR 2000	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	26
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	✪✪◐	38
NASCAR Heat	Hasbro	✪✪✪◐	40
NASCAR Rumble	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪◐	31
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	✪✪	52
NASCAR Thunder 2004	EA Sports	✪◐	74
NBA Fastbreak 98	Midway	✪✪◐	4
NBA Hoopz	Midway	✪✪✪	43
NBA In the Zone 98	Konami	✪✪◐	7
NBA In the Zone 99	Konami	✪✪✪◐	19
NBA In the Zone 2000	Konami	✪✪◐	28
NBA Live 98	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪◐	3
NBA Live 99	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	16
NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪◐	28
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	39
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	✪✪✪◐	53
NBA ShootOut 98	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	8
NBA ShootOut 2000	989 Studios	✪✪✪	30
NBA ShootOut 2001	989 Studios	✪✪◐	39
NBA ShootOut 2002	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	50
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	✪✪✪◐	63
NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC	Midway	✪✪✪	28
NBA Tonight	ESPN Digital	✪✪✪	14
NCAA Final Four 99	989 Studios	✪✪✪◐	18
NCAA Final Four 2000	989 Studios	✪✪✪◐	28
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	✪✪	40
NCAA Football 98	EA Sports	✪✪	2
NCAA Football 99	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪◐	12
NCAA Football 2000	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	25

REPLAY FORUM

BACKYARD WRESTLING: I figured out two hints that should be helpful:

Easy Win First Level (Talk Show mode): Start by knocking out your opponent until it says "Punch Drunk." Run to the bed and press Triangle at the gas tank, then pull the opponent to the area by the tires. Next, climb to the roof; he will begin to throw tires at you, but he'll also go through the fire, hurting himself, so just dodge the tires and wait for him to get KO'd.

Pin: press L1 + R1 when your opponent is on the ground.

Know any other cool cheats?

Steve Pollack
steve_pollack299@yahoo.com

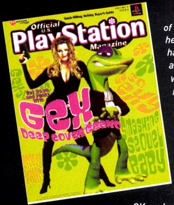
Since you ask, here are some more! Go to create-a-wrestler mode and give the following names for the intended effect (don't worry, the names aren't case sensitive):

rtaylor: big head
okendall: big hands
tpiperi: big feet
tho: big head, big hands, and big feet
edma: first-person camera
jche: player one invulnerable
cbarlow: player two invulnerable
denicholas: invulnerable players
ddaniels: player one unlimited supers
jmaxwell: player two unlimited supers
donttrythisathome: unlocks all cheats

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NCAA Football 2001	EA Sports	✪✪✪◐	36
NCAA GameBreaker 98	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	4
NCAA GameBreaker 99	989 Studios	✪✪✪✪	15
NCAA GameBreaker 2000	989 Studios	✪✪✪	25
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	✪✪◐	37
NCAA March Madness 98	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	7
NCAA March Madness 99	EA Sports	✪✪✪	18
NCAA March Madness 2000	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	29
NCAA March Madness 2001	EA Sports	✪✪	41
Nectaris: Military Madness	Jaleco	✪✪✪✪	17
Need for Speed III	**Electronic Arts**	✪✪✪✪	**8**
Need for Speed: High Stakes	**Electronic Arts**	✪✪✪✪◐	**20**
Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪◐	33
Need for Speed: V-Rally	Electronic Arts	✪◐	3
Need for Speed: V-Rally 2	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪◐	28
Newman/Haas Racing	Psygnosis	✪✪	7
The Next Tetris	Hasbro	✪✪✪	24
NFL Blitz	**Midway**	✪✪✪✪✪	**13**
NFL Blitz 2000	**Midway**	✪✪✪✪✪	**24**
NFL Blitz 2001	Midway	✪✪✪◐	38
NFL GameDay 98	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**1**
NFL GameDay 99	989 Studios	✪✪✪✪	13
NFL GameDay 2000	989 Studios	✪✪✪✪	25
NFL GameDay 2001	989 Studios	✪✪◐	37
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	✪✪	49
NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	62
NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	✪✪	74
NFL Xtreme	989 Studios	✪✪	11
NFL Xtreme 2	989 Studios	✪◐	24
NHL 98	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	2
NHL 99	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪◐	15
NHL 2000	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	26
NHL 2001	EA Sports	✪✪✪✪	38
NHL Blades of Steel 2000	Konami	✪✪	28
NHL Breakaway 98	Acclaim	✪✪✪	2
NHL Championship 2000	Fox Interactive	✪✪✪	27
NHL FaceOff 98	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**2**
NHL FaceOff 99	989 Studios	✪✪✪✪	14
NHL FaceOff 2000	989 Studios	✪✪✪✪	26
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪◐	38
NHL Rock the Rink	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪✪	32
Nick Toons Racing	Infogrames	✪✪✪	48
Nightmare Creatures	Activision	✪✪✪◐	3
Nightmare Creatures II	Konami	✪✪	33
Ninja: Shadow of Darkness	Eidos	✪◐	15
Nuclear Strike	Electronic Arts	✪✪✪✪◐	3
O.D.T.	Psygnosis	✪◐	15
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	✪✪✪✪◐	15
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	**GT Interactive**	✪✪✪✪	**1**
Omega Boost	Sony CEA	✪✪✪✪	25
One	ASC	✪✪✪✪	4
One Piece Mansion	Capcom	✪◐	50
Pac-Man World	**Namco**	✪✪✪✪◐	**25**
Pandemonium! 2	Midway	✪✪✪◐	3
Panzer Front	Agetec	✪✪✪◐	51
PaRappa the Rapper	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**2**
Parasite Eve	**Square EA**	✪✪✪✪	**12**
Parasite Eve II	Square EA	✪✪✪✪◐	37
Patriotic PInball	Gotham Games	✪✪◐	70
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	Atlus	✪✪✪✪	41
Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf	Infogrames	✪✪✪◐	41
PGA Tour 98	EA Sports	✪✪✪	3
Phix: The Adventure	Agetec	✪◐	74
Pinobee	Konami	✪✪	68
Pipe Dreams 3D	Empire Int.	✪✪	52
Pitfall 3D	Activision	✪✪	9
Planet of the Apes	Ubi Soft	✪✪✪	63
Play With The Teletubbies	Knowledge Adv.	✪✪	36
Pocket Fighter	Capcom	✪✪✪✪	11
Point Blank	Namco	✪✪✪◐	6
Point Blank 2	Namco	✪✪✪◐	20
Point Blank 3	Namco	✪✪✪◐	44
Polaris SnoCross	Vatical	✪✪◐	38
Pong	Hasbro	✪✪✪◐	27

REWIND

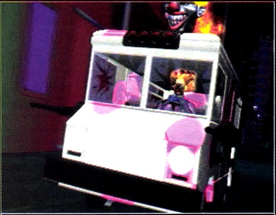
Tonight we're gonna party like it's 1999



What happened back in January of 1999? Well, gamingwise, we heard rumors about what kind of hardware the PS2 would sport and that Square was starting to work on the Final Fantasy movie. That, and there was some partying, since Prince told us all to party like it was 1999, which it was. Now, some other interesting news bits and highlights from five years ago this month.

WORST GAME OF JANUARY 1999: TWISTED METAL III

While change is usually good (we have high hopes for Crystal Dynamics handling Lara), it wasn't so for 989 Studios developing *Twisted Metal III* instead of SingleTrac. Everything that was cool about the franchise in the first place was sucked out and replaced with kooky physics and bad levels.



Twisted Metal III

GEX?

OK, we're not entirely sure why we did this cover. Call us optimists at the time. Granted, *Gex: Deep Cover Gecko* isn't a terrible game, it just isn't a remarkably good game, either. The nicest thing we ended up saying about it was that there were a lot of levels and it looked neat, but like any other platformer, it's snagged by numerous camera problems. Plux, Gex got annoying. Ironically, Chip Blundell, Crystal Dynamics' product marketing manager at the time, expounded on the short (10-15 seconds) cut-scenes that advance the plot. How did Crystal Dynamics go from microconversations to the long, voluminous laments in the *Legacy of Kain* franchise?

As for the cover girl, Miss Marliece Andrada, she's moved on to, well, nothing. All she has on her resume is *Gex*, a season of *Baywatch*, and some *Playboy* vids. And nothing since 1999. Hopefully, her noncareer after being in our issue is a fluke and we don't end up having the same effect on our cover stars as the *Madden* box covers do.

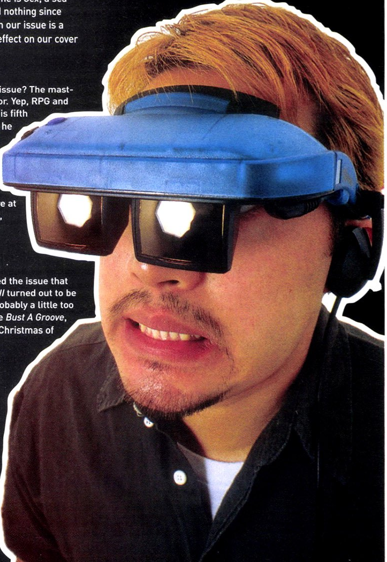
END OF AN ERA

Honestly, what was the biggest event in the issue? The masthead listing one Gary Steinman as copy editor. Yep, RPG and Platformer Extraordinaire Gary celebrates his fifth anniversary at *OPM* this month. Long before he got all sorts of *Jak II* hate mail, he was just just dotting our i's and crossing our t's. We figure it was years of backstabbing, treachery, and general mischief that elevated Gary from mere typo-corrector to *Final Fantasy* wordsmith. Alas, those days are at an end, as Gary's now moving on to *Newtype*, where he can indulge his love of all things Japanime. We'll miss you, Gary.

BEST GAME OF JANUARY 1999

There wasn't any single game that dominated the issue that month, just a lot of solid buys. *Tomb Raider III* turned out to be a mediocre, yet unpainful game (we were probably a little too generous with the 3.5 rating), but games like *Bust A Groove*, *NBA Live 99*, and *Darkstalkers 3* proved that Christmas of '98 didn't totally suck.

Tomb Raider III



GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Pool Hustler	Activision	●●●●	15
Populous: The Beginning	Electronic Arts	●◖	21
Porsche Challenge	Sony CEA	●●●◖	1
Power Play Sports Trivia	Ubi Soft	●●	58
Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue	THQ	●◖	40
Power Shovel	Acclaim	●●●	49
Power Soccer 2	Psygnosis	●●●	5
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	Infogrames	●●◖	41
The Powerpuff Girls: Chemical X-Traction	Bam	●◖	51
Poy Poy	Konami	●●●	3
Pro 18 World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	●●	19
Pro Pinball: Big Race USA	Empire	●●●◖	37
Pro Pinball: Fantastic Journey	Empire	●●●◖	37
Pro Pinball: Timeshock!	Take 2	●	10
Psybadek	Psygnosis	●●	15
Punky Skunk	Jaleco	●●●	6
Putter Golf	Agetec	◖	53
Puzzle Star Sweep	Agetec	●●◖	43
Puzznic	Mud Duck	●	71
Q-Bert	Hasbro	●●◖	28
Quake II	Activision	●●●●	27
R-Type Delta	Agetec	●●●●◖	23
R-Types	Ascii	●●●◖	17
R4: Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	●●●●	20
Racing	Agetec	◖	43
Rage Ball	Agetec	●◖	68
Railroad Tycoon II	Take 2	●●●	30
Rainbow Six	Red Storm	●	27
Rally Cross 2	989 Studios	●●●◖	15
Rampage	Midway	●●◖	4
Rampage 2: Universal Tour	Midway	●	21
Rampage Through Time	Midway	●◖	36
Ray Tracers	THQ	●●●	5
RayCrisis	Working Designs	●●●	38
Rayman 2: The Great Escape	Ubi Soft	●●●●	35
Rayman Brain Games	Ubi Soft	●●●	50
Rayman Rush	Ubi Soft	●●●	57
Razor Freestyle Scooter	Crave	●●●	41
RC de GO!	Acclaim	●●●●	40
RC Helicopter	Agetec	●◖	68
RC Revenge	Acclaim	●●●◖	37
RC Stunt Copter	Titus	●●●●	25
Re-Volt	Acclaim	●●	26
Ready 2 Rumble	**Midway**	●●●◖	**27**
Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2	Midway	●●●	40
Red Asphalt	Interplay	●◖	3
Reel Fishing	**Natsume**	●●●	**3**
Reel Fishing II	Natsume	●●	34
Resident Evil: Director's Cut	**Capcom**	●●●	**2**
Resident Evil 2	**Capcom**	●●●●●	**6**
Resident Evil 2: Dual Shock	**Capcom**	●●●●●	**13**
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	Capcom	●●●●◖	27
Resident Evil: Survivor	Capcom	●◖	38
Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	Atlus	●●●	35
Rising Zan	Agetec	●●●●	24
Risk	Hasbro	●●●●	11
Rival Schools	Capcom	●●●●	14
Riven: The Sequel to Myst	**Acclaim**	★★★★★	**6**
Road Rash 3D	**Electronic Arts**	●●●	**11**
Road Rash: Jail Break	Electronic Arts	●●	30
Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots	Mattel	●●●	41
Rocket Power: Team Rocket Rescue	THQ	●◖	51
Rogue Trip	GT Interactive	●●●◖	14
Roll Away	Psygnosis	●●●●◖	13
Rollcage	Psygnosis	●●●◖	19
Rollcage Stage II	Psygnosis	●●●◖	31
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VI	Koei	●●	30
Roswell Conspiracies: Aliens, Myths, & Legends	Red Storm	●	48
RPG Maker	Agetec	●●●●◖	35
Rugrats: Totally Angelica	THQ	●●●◖	48
Rugrats in Paris: The Movie	THQ	●●●	41
Runabout 2	Hot-B	●	36
Running Wild	989 Studios	●●	14
Rushdown	Electronic Arts	●●	19

DO YOU REMEMBER...

The Adolescent Radioactive Black-Belt Hamsters? Or the Pre-Teen Dirty-Gene Kung Fu Kangaroos? Neither do we, but they existed. Really. Look 'em up.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Sabrina, Teenage Witch: A Twitch in Time!	Knowledge Adv.	◐	45
SaGa Frontier	Sony CEA	●●●◐	8
SaGa Frontier 2	Square EA	●●●◐	29
Saiyuki: Journey West	Koei	●●●◐	47
Saltwater Sportfishing	Agetec	●●◐	52
Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001	3DO	●●	32
Sammy Sosa Softball Slam	3DO	●●	33
Samurai Shodown: Warrior's Rage	SNK	●◐	36
Scooby-Doo and the Cyber Chase	THQ	●●	52
Scrabble	Hasbro	●●◐	28
Sentinel Returns	Psygnosis	●●	11
Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	●●●◐	54
Shadow Madness	Crave	●●◐	19
Shadow Man	Acclaim	●◐	27
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	●●●●	5
Shadow Tower	Agetec	◐	28
Shanghai: True Valor	Sunsoft	●●●	20
Sheep	Empire	●●●	41
Shrek: Treasure Hunt	TDK Mediactive	n/a	n/a
Shipwreckers	Psygnosis	●●●	3
Shooter: Space Shot	Agetec	●●●◐	48
Shooter: Starfighter Sanvein	Agetec	●●	43
Silent Bomber	Bandai	●●●●	30
Silent Hill	**Konami**	●●●●	**18**
Silhouette Mirage	Working Designs	●●●◐	29
Sim Theme Park	Electronic Arts	●●◐	33
The Simpsons Wrestling	Taito	●●	45
Skullmonkeys	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★★	**6**
Skydiving Extreme	Banpresto	●◐	49
Sled Storm	**Electronic Arts**	●●●●	**24**
Slots	Activision	●●	72
Small Soldiers	Electronic Arts	●◐	15
Smurfs	Infogrames	●●●●	29
Smurf Racer	Infogrames	●●	45
Sno-Cross Championship Racing	Crave	●◐	37
Snowboarding	Agetec	●●	43
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Trickin' Snowboarder	Capcom	●◐	25
Triple Play '99	EA Sports	●●◐	9
Triple Play 2000	EA Sports	●●●●◐	20
Triple Play 2001	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**32**
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●◐	44

REPLAY FORUM

TMNT SECRETS

Yo, *OPM*!

I think the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are totally rad, and I disagree with C Bake's review of their latest game, but that's neither here nor there.

I started the game as Raphael, and I beat the first area and took a break from the main game and then started playing the versus mode. I saw that I unlocked Casey! But when I finished the next level, no one was unlocked. Can you tell me who the rest of the characters are and how to unlock them? Thanks!

Donald Marrs
New York, NY

Unlocking the seven remaining multiplayer characters is actually pretty straightforward. It's just a matter of finishing the right areas with the right turtles, here's a quick reference for you:

Casey Jones: Finish stage 1 as Raphael.

Evil Turtlebot: Finish stage 3, doesn't matter which turtle you use.

Hun: Complete stage 6 as Michelangelo.

Splinter: Finish Dojo stage 3 as Leonardo.

Shredder: Defeat Shredder, doesn't matter which turtle you use.

Oroku Saki: Like Shredder, just finish him off to unlock him. Works with any turtle.

Hamato Yoshi: Just finish the Challenge mode.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Turbo Prop Racing	Sony CEA	●●●	11
Turnabout	Natsume	●●●●	69
Twisted Metal III	**989 Studios**	●●◐	**16**
Twisted Metal 4	**989 Studios**	●●●●	**28**
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Tyco RC: Assault With a Battery	Mattel	●●	38
Ultimate 8-Ball	THQ	●●●●	22
Ultimate Fighting Championship	Crave	●●◐	40
UmJammer Lammy	Sony CEA	●●●◐	24
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Uprising X	3DO	●●●	17
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Valkyrie Profile	Enix	●●●●	36
Vampire Hunter D	Jaleco	●●	37
Vanark	Jaleco	●●●	32
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V.I.P.	Ubi Soft	●●	51
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Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	●●●	29
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WCW/nWo Thunder	THQ	●	17
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Winnie the Pooh: Preschool	Bam	n/a	n/a
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Worms World Party	Ubi Soft	●●●●	55
Wu-Tang Shaolin Style	Activision	●●●	28
WWF Attitude	Acclaim	●●●●	24
WWF SmackDown!	**THQ**	●●●●◐	**31**
WWF SmackDown! 2	**THQ**	★★★★★	**40**
WWF War Zone	**Acclaim**	●●●●	**12**
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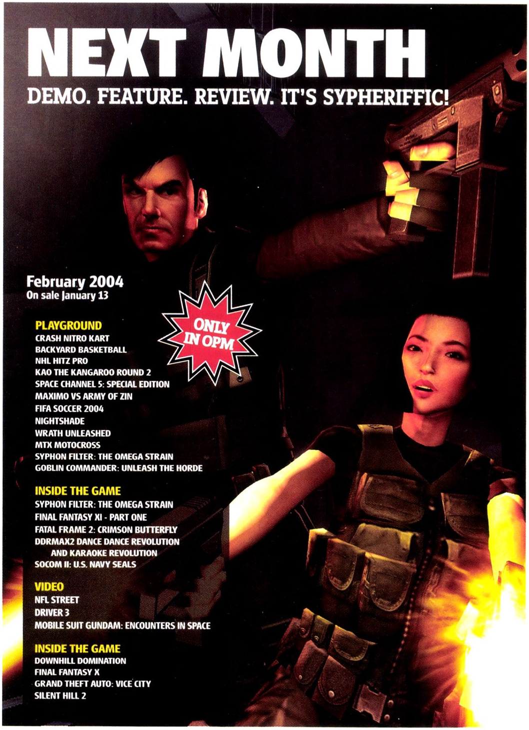
P.S. What kind of name is "Gabe" anyway?

40,200,000 The number of people estimated to be playing games online by the year 2008.



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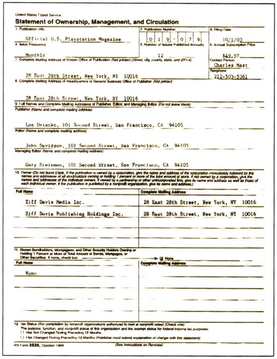

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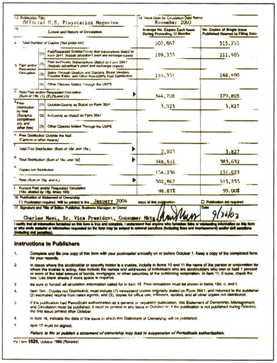

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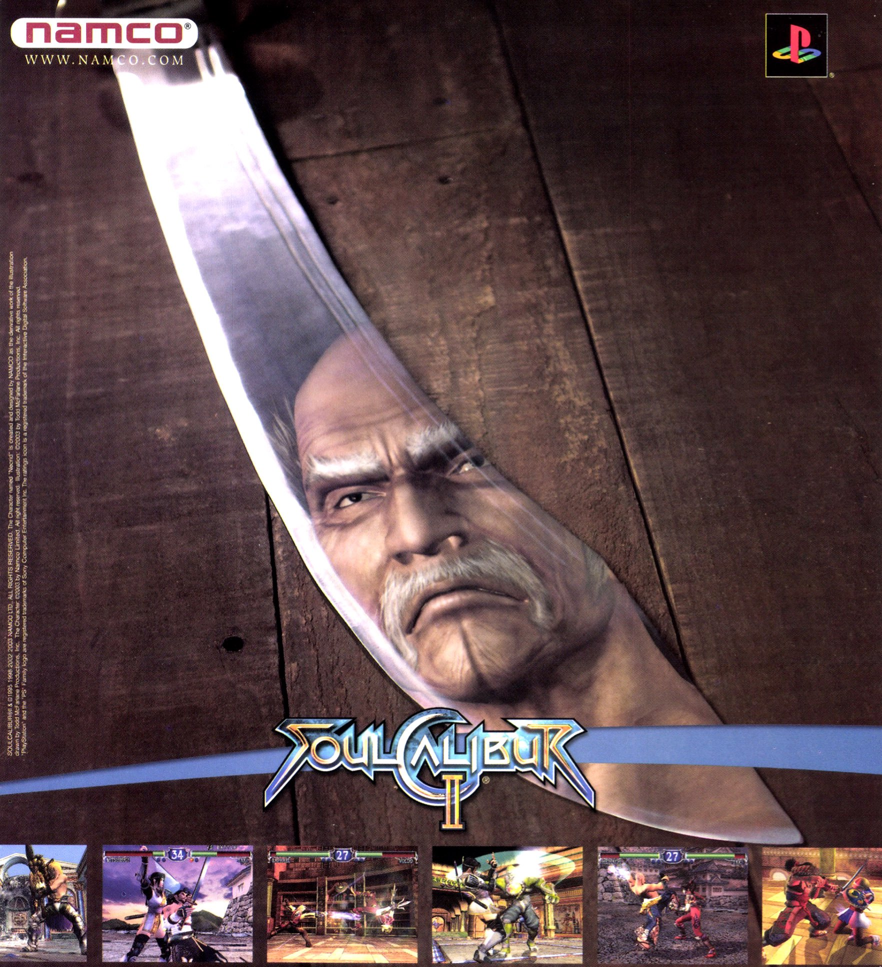

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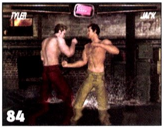
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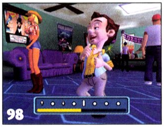
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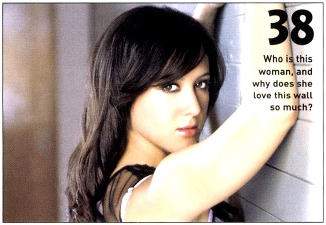
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Who is this woman, and why does she love this wall so much?

PLAYABLE: SOCOM II RISE TO HONOR & MORE!

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

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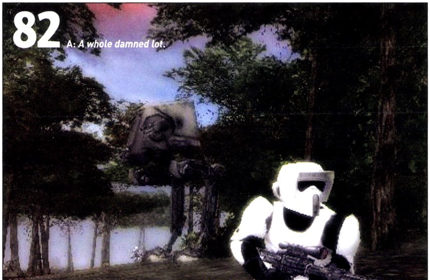
Now that the huge holiday game glut is over, it's time to look forward to next year. What we found might surprise you.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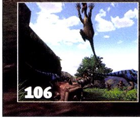
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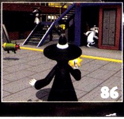
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114	Crash Nitro Kart	★★★½
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114	ESPN College Hoops	★★★½
118	Ford Racing 2	★★½
133	Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	★★½
118	Fugitive Hunter	★
120	Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	★★★★
120	Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	★★½
118	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	★½
120	The Hobbit	★★★½
123	The King of Fighters 2000/2001	★★½
123	Kya: Dark Lineage	★★½
124	Legacy of Kain: Defiance	★★½
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125	Midway Arcade Treasures	★★★½
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122	Tony Hawk's Underground	★★★★★
131	True Crime: Streets of L.A.	★★
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113	Whiplash	★★★½
133	World Championship Pool 2004	★★
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133	MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	★
133	NBA Shootout 2004	★

PERIPHERALS

133	Clash Pads	★★★
133	Control Element	★★★★
133	FPS Master	★★★½
133	iType2 Keyboard Controller	★★★★
133	Recoil	★★½
133	Visual Entertainment Generator	★★★½

ON THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE PS2 DVD

PLAYGROUND

- SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs
- Freedom Fighters
- Conflict: Desert Storm II–Back to Baghdad
- Madden NFL 2004
- NCAA Football 2004
- ESPN College Hoops
- Rise to Honor
- R-Type Final
- Whiplash
- Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius
- Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

DOWNLOADS

- Dragon Ball Z: Budokai
- Ape Escape 2

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Marketing Team **Kim Yuen, Steve Williams, Jesse Caid**
Executive Producers **Andrew House, Marilyn Weyant**
Format Q&A **Sam Bradley, DeMarlo King**
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3D Artists **Jason Robinson, Philip Williamson, David Hayes**
Producer **Jessi Harrison**
President **Katherine Williams**
Technical Director **Tim Edwards**

SPECIAL THANKS
Maimoona Block, Kirsten Costello, Tom Gillan, Michelle Manahan, Gerald Martin, Jim Williams

FIGHT!

SNEAKING, SHOOTING, FIGHTING, AND...FOOTBALL?

This month's disc is chock full of earnest warriors fighting for glory and country in the desert, in the jungle, and on the gridiron. Plus: Jet Li. How can you go wrong? Once you're done getting your shootin' on, come back here to try out the following challenges.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE
Issue 76
SCUS 97261
DVD ROM
RP-M

SOCOM II: U.S. NAVY SEALS

THE DETAILS: It's the first level of the single-player campaign. Set in Albania, this one is fairly easy to beat...but just as hard as you could possibly want to earn a perfect performance rating on.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...hitting the deck? In one of our favorite improvements on the original, if you mash down △ while running, you'll flop to the ground.

...getting 100% Stealth rating? This is only the first level of the game, but it's friggin' hard to completely avoid detection. The key here is patience: if it doesn't take you at least half an hour to beat the mission, you're rushing things. Slow it down.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

THE DETAILS: This is a somewhat altered version of one of the earliest levels in the game, but it gives you a chance to try out the excellent controls and solid teammate A.I.—and ogle the nice graphics.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...commanding your troops? Target an enemy and press △—*hard*—and all your allies will move in to take that guy out. Target an are and press ○ and they'll move to protect that area. Hitting ○ brings them back to follow you. If you just *tap* these buttons, though, it will order one person at a time.

...cranking up the volume? This game has one of the best scores we've ever heard.

WHIPLASH

THE DETAILS: Bizarre, hysterical, and sometimes just plain sick, *Whiplash* makes a name for itself by being just a little—ok, a lot—different from just about every other platformer that's ever existed.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...charging up Redmond? Bust enough crap up and Redmond will go into hyperkinetic bunny mode, bouncing in all directions and racking up some serious repair bills.

...bouncing on the scientists' bellies? You can do it once you knock them down. It's fun.

...breaking everything? Just about everything can be smashed to smithereens. Enjoy.

RISE TO HONOR

THE DETAILS: Jet Li rocks in real life, but will his videogame counterpart be half as cool? Right now the controls seem a little jerky, but hopefully they can smooth that out before the game releases.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...throwing anything you can pick up? Hold R1 next to a chair or other moveable object and you can hurl it at your enemy.

...bashing your enemy's face into a convenient wall, door, or table? Hold down R1 and tap the right analog stick in the direction of an enemy, and you'll grab him. From there you can perform advanced grab moves like the head smash.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

THE DETAILS: Slice n' dice! Slice n' dice! Slice n' dice! *Slice n' dice! Slice n' dice!* SLICE N' DICE! SLICE N' DICE! *SLICE N' DICE! SLICE N' DICE!* ***SLICE N' DICE! SLICE N' DICE! SLICE N' DICE!***

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...beating the demo without making Leo say "slice n' dice"? Yeah, good luck, buddy.

...seeing what you can break? A lot of the stuff in the environment is destructible. (And some of the stuff isn't.) Sometimes, though, you'll get health bonuses and stuff for breaking scenery. Whee.

...tapping R2 to dash? It doesn't seem to have much purpose, but hey, it's better than "slice n' dice"!

DISC PROBLEMS?

Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "OPM Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

Also, if you have a malfunctioning or non-working demo disc, call EDS at 1-800-627-6458. They will provide instructions to obtain repair or replacement services.

Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) warrants to the original purchaser of the Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine that the demo disc included is free from defects in material and workmanship for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of purchase. SCEA agrees for a period of ninety (90) days to either repair or replace, at its option, the SCEA product. You must call EDS at 1-800-627-6458 to receive instructions to obtain repair/replacement services.

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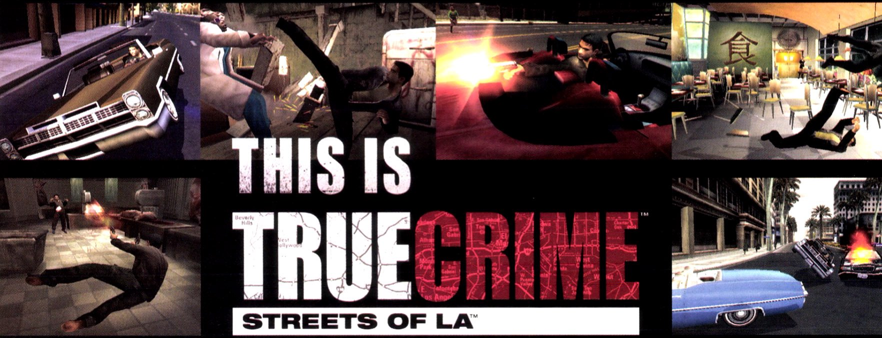

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PlayStation 2

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

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MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Mature Sexual Themes
Strong Language
Violence

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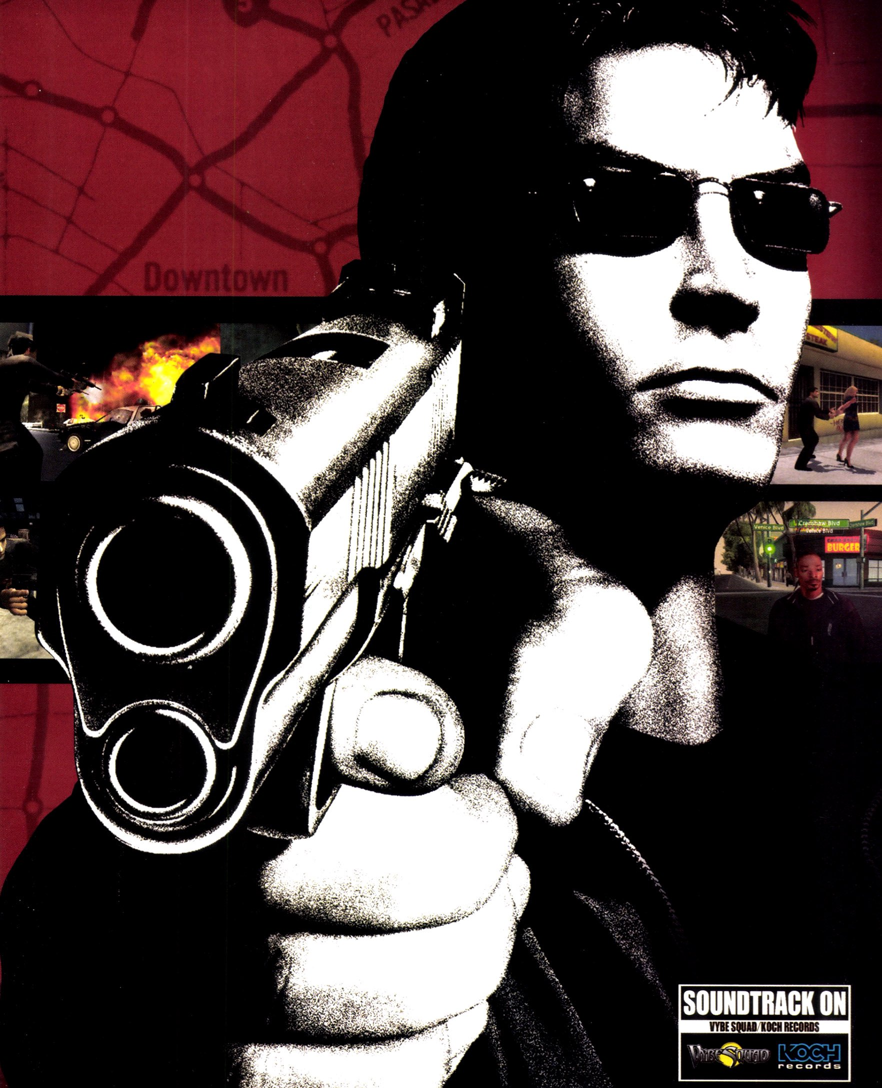
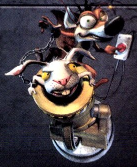
*Nintendo GameCube game contains fewer songs.

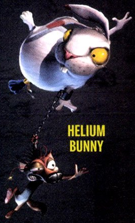

Downtown
Venice Blvd
Crenshaw Blvd
BURGER
SOUNDTRACK ON
VYBE SQUAD/KOCH RECORDS
VYBE SQUAD
KOCH records

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

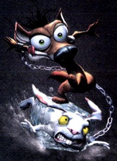
Flaming Fur Ball or Radioactive Rabbit? Choose your weapon wisely or you and your fellow fugitive will be forever subjected to a life of twisted animal testing. Shackled together, Spanx must use the indestructible Redmond as a weapon and tool for escape from an evil corporation.



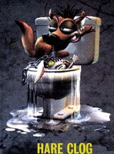
BUNNY CANNON



HELIUM BUNNY



HARE-SICLE



HARE CLOG

- Flaming Fur Ball
- Bunny Grinder
- Radioactive Rabbit
- Bunny Fuse
- Hare-sicle
- Electro Static Rabbit
- Hungry Bunny
- Hare Clog
- Tug-O-Rabbit
- 10 Ton Bunny
- Bunny Cannon
- Helium Bunny
- Hyper Hare
- Stuffed Rabbit
- Chocolate Bunny

Bust

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Violence
Comic Mischief

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

eidos

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Demolish everything from security cameras to test equipment.

Knock out the evil lab staff with loads of combo attacks.

"Whiplash is one of those games that just oozes cool." – PSM

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PlayStation 2

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NEW DANGERS THREATEN SPIRA.
FAMILIAR ALLIES ARE AT HAND.
AND SOMEWHERE, SOMEHOW,
A FRIEND MAY STILL BE ALIVE...

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Suggestive Themes
Violence

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DOLBY DIGITAL PRO LOGIC II
Dolby Digital Surround EX

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INPUT

Where we get to be pen-pals.

WWW.THEONION.COM
Go here every Wednesday. It's full of the Ha-Ha.

8 PLAYABLE PS2 GAMES INSIDE!
OFFICIAL U.S.
PlayStation
MAGAZINE
Final FANTASY X-2

Pretty much everyone who commented on the cover and the feature loved both. Becky Briggs summarizes the overall consensus with, "I wanted to play all of the jobs/classes that I read about–it's that convincing." Yet amongst all the love, Cyrus Baetz was alone in saying, "I'm unconvinced by your cover section on *FFX-2*." Boo! Hiss!

Rockstar Violence

You asked readers to write in about their thoughts on *Manhunt*. Here are just some of mine.

Manhunt is the most shameless, disgusting prostitution of senseless, moral-less vulgarity ever to smear the reputation of the console system industry. See, when hesitant parents tune in to discussion forums rallying against allowing today's youth to play videogames, this is the game they will use to prove their point. And this is not really fair, because there are a lot of excellent games out there that have respect for the target audience they are after, and have some degree of educational value (i.e., *Medal of Honor*, *SOCOM*, even football games).

Steve Cantrell
Via e-mail

My three favorite games ever: *Resident Evil*, *Twisted Metal Black*, and *Grand Theft Auto III*. See the pattern? I'm an adult and I play adult games.

The way I see it, Rockstar is doing a fabulous job with their gaming choices. Violent games and games with harsh subject matter are their genre. Let's put it this way: Would you ask Quentin Tarantino to do a romantic comedy? Or Jerry Seinfeld to do a psychological thriller? Or best yet, *OPM* to write about the Xbox? No, you wouldn't, because that's not their field of expertise. So, why would you ask Rockstar to stray from its field of expertise? Should Rockstar put out a bunch of kiddie games or alter the total image of a game like Midway did with *MK* for the Super NES, just to appease a few parents? What I really don't get is why people who dislike a game for its' content even pay attention to it? I happen to like those kinds of games because I am an older gamer. That's why I don't bother with games like *SpongeBob SquarePants* or *Animal Crossing*. That's why I didn't get a GameCube. The bottom line is: The more people keep ragging on Rockstar for its games, the better they sell. And that's fine with me.

Chris Williamson
Via e-mail

Interesting responses to Rockstar's latest project. For our official take, read Scooter's review over on page 116.

CONTACT OPM

Snail Mail
OPM
101 Second Street, 8th Floor
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E-mail
opm@ziffdavis.com and check us out at www.playstationmagazine.com

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415.547.8777

Word to the Wrestlers

So, if there is a game where rappers wrestle, isn't the next logical step a game where wrestlers rap? Are there any plans for a WWE rapping game?

Andrew Jones
Via e-mail

Funny you mention that. While we haven't heard any plans for a WWE rap game, your idea has already been explored: Randy "Macho Man" Savage has his own rap album called *Be A Man*. Check it out. Or not.

BE A MAN
MACHO MAN
Randy Savage

Heather Morris Located!

Wow, not to say that you guys are lacking in your research department, but finding a picture of the actress who voices Heather in *Silent Hill 3* was hard, yet possible. I adore the game and did a three-day hunt for any info on this actress. Bingo, I got a picture. The picture is from a low budget movie she did titled *Silo Killer*. You can check out the website at www.silokiller.com. Here's a picture of her directly from the website.

Chad Armstrong
Via e-mail

You dare to slight us, but then you snag us a pic. We're even.

Delicious Onions

Recently I was browsing on the Internet, and I wound up at *The Onion*, volume 39, issue 40. As I was reading the articles, one stood out to me. It was about the guy whose ex-girlfriend was playing *Virtua Fighter* with another guy. Most of the "people" in the article had the names of *OPM* staff writers (with some minor changes). It made me giggle and I was curious...did one of your staff writers contribute this article?

Brandy
Via e-mail

No one here moonlights for the *Onion*, but we do know that an *Onion* staff writer is a friend of former *OPM* editor Todd Zuniga.

the ONION

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

From message boards to printed page

OPM's monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at boards.1UP.com.

HOLY CRAP! SOCOM II!

There were no fewer than three threads on the first page dedicated to *SOCOM II*. **Botkiller** comments, "I really like that they changed Rat's Nest so much. It makes it so you have to rethink all your strategies when playing, which is nice."

oralb808 amusingly quips "voice modulation=dumbest addition to any game, ever. Why?!?!?! Everyone sounds like a jackass with it on."

Most interesting, though, are the negative comments. **DatMonkey** asks, "Any other *SOCOM* fans not feeling *SOCOM II*?" and later writes, "My first 48 minutes of *SOCOM* left me in awe and not wanting to put the controller down. The only reason I even made it to 48 minutes [in SOCOM II] was cuz I got into a fun respawn game which was pretty cool."

ohJTBehaaave summarizes a popular criticism, the darkness of the maps with, "The darkness on these maps is hideous to me. To me it's taking the skill out of the game which is precision shooting... sniping and strategy...and now rewards and encourages you to sit in one spot."

PRINCELY PERSIA

Everyone else is pretty much discovering for themselves the sheer awesomeness of *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time*. **JustinCredible1**, like many others, played the demo and said he breathes a sigh of relief, then follows said sigh with, "it was bad ass; like *Rygar* and *Eternal Darkness* combined, quite possibly one of the most promising games I've played in a while..."

Early-doubter **Ryosei** admits, "As such, I must apologize to Joe, for my unfounded and misguided claims towards this game. Through experience, I've seen the light that is this magnificent title, and as a gamer, I find myself the better for it."

edgerunner breathes a sigh of relief and follows said sigh with, "It's heartening to hear how great the game actually turned out." Everyone else was too busy playing it.

JAK II

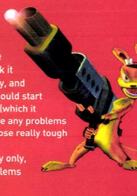
Now that everyone's read it, Gary's review of *Jak II* has instigated some interesting opinions. **boojitede** comments, "brilliant level design in that whenever you complete one of the larger missions, you always end up near the entrance/exit when you finish. Also has pretty interesting story and great voice acting."

GGFGT replies to Gary's points with, "What parts do you think were hard? My 11-year-old brother is farther than me (It's actually his game, but I had to help him on only one part) and he finds it reasonably easy."

Apocalypse_Cow adds, "The *GTA*-style city and mission system works brilliantly. I love the combat, perfect controls, perfect camera, and I picked up on the driving right away! I think it controls like *GTA:VC*, only better."

ltlguy chimes in with, "The difficulty is quite steep compared to *Jak and Daxter*, but I think it should be in a way. The first was far too easy, and since the story continues, I think this one should start out around the difficulty the original left off (which it pretty much does) so so far I dont really have any problems with the difficulty. Have to wait for one of those really tough missions, to see what I say then."

Yuffie87 defends Gary with "[...] It's not Gary only, but some gamers out there have some problems with the game, too."



I'm not a diva, but I play one on TV.

INPUT

You have questions. We have unsatisfactory answers.

HARDCORE FLYING

Someone in the Netherlands hooked together nine monitors just to play one flight simulator on his PC.

Princely Writing

As I was checking out the November issue, the first thing I looked at was the cover. I took a closer look at the sword that the Prince had in his hand and I noticed the Arabic writing on it. The gold writing says, "The Strong Night Before Me." It kind of means, "This sword has been given to me by the strong night before me." Cool, huh?

Nawaf Al-Baghly
Via e-mail

Damn straight! We love it when readers provide us with genuine enlightenment.

Killing Zone

Thank you for the piece on *Killzone* in your November issue. It has been long rumored to be a *Halo* "killer." Every other publication, printed and Web alike, has declared it to be just that! I find it both refreshing and surprising, to see a magazine associated only with the PlayStation brand to be the only publication to bring everyone back down to earth by reporting facts only about this game.

The title *Halo* killer is one that has yet to be achieved by any game, and it will take more than screenshots, video, or rumors to earn. The fact that some publications are printing this only goes to show how far the professionalism of game journalism has fallen off in recent years. When a true *Halo* killer comes along—whether it's *Killzone*, *Half-Life 2*, or even if it just turns out to be *Halo 2*—I will rejoice right alone with ever other FPS fan. Until then, I'll let *Halo* have the crown it so rightfully deserves.

Joseph E. Dennis Jr.
Jackson, MI

Nice to know our effort is appreciated. You can also read some hands-on impressions in our feature on page 74.

Vampire Nerds Clash Heads

Now, nothing against your new reviewer Giancarlo Varanini, it's just I'm not too familiar with the type of games he enjoys and what series he's a fan of. I know Sam Kennedy (well, from what I have been reading over the past years) is a huge fan of the *Castlevania* series and I'd love to hear his opinions on the new *Castlevania*, how he feels about whether the translation to 3D works well, and if it has that *Castlevania* spirit. Any kind of info would be appreciated.

Scott Ross
Via e-mail

Sam Kennedy responds: "I actually haven't had a chance to fully play it, but from what I've played of it, I like it, but I don't love it. It's not what I ultimately hoped for." Then, after we've moved onto a different conversation, he added, "The music is pretty good, though." As for Giancarlo, he's also a hardcore *Castlevania* nut. He once paid $120 for a copy of *Dracula X: Rondo Of Blood*.

TMNT

Upon reading your review of the new *TMNT* game, I was shocked—mainly because I saw the 2.5 before anything else. But as I read, I must regretfully agree with you on the flaws in this game, though I have a simple remedy: I have two TVs right next to each other and a cable splitter, so when I play *TMNT* or other fine PS2 titles, I simply mute the TV with the game and then watch a show on the other as I play. I don't have to hear Donatello proposition the Foot for a game of stick ball, and am also distracted by the fact that I can play blindfolded by moving the left analog and tapping X. Those arguments aside, I would've given it at least 3.5 stars or maybe game of the year. I mean, it's the Turtles!

Brad
Via e-mail

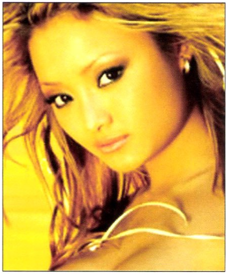
That's an interesting, if semi-impractical and expensive solution. Your solution gets 3.5 stars, but *TMNT* still gets 2.5.

Win Nguyen?

Does one of your writers have any relation to the überhot model Tila Nguyen? Just wanted to know because they have the same last name. And if they do, do you think they could hook me up with her? Possibly....

George Foreman
Via e-mail

Of course Thierry "Scooter" Nguyen is related to Tila. They have the same last name, duh. He answered, "Sure thing. Her number is (415) 356-9833. Remind her that she owes me a round of *Star Wars Monopoly*."



QUICK HITS

SAY WHAT?

uless they are names that like say how cool i am which it is pretty hard not to talk about how cool i am because my coolness is like a 12 out of 10 which is not very high if you consider im from Missouri

Blake Stagner
Via e-mail

Huh? For the rest of you reading this, that was verbatim.

CLISH MAD!

Have you heard anything about a sequel to *FFIX*? If not, please keep trying and let us know, or get your Clish bitch on it (just a joke! Don't get mad, Clish!).

Shey Hutchison
Newport, MS

Nope, And Clish is mad. Shame on you.

ASK US ANYTHING!

And Scooter will say "No"

SYSTEM HATE

Q. I was just wondering. Do you guys get any hate mail from Xbox or GameCube owners? And if you do, how do you respond?

BE11
Via e-mail

A. No.

DODGE THIS

Q. I'm a specialist in the U.S. Army deployed in Baghdad; I'm a 63B (Light Vehicle Mechanic) that works mostly on Humvees.

Well, my question was, I own a 1995 Dodge Neon, and I would like to know if the car is in any videogame other than *GT2* and *Need For Speed Underground*.

Jack Chan
Sent via military mail box

A. Nyet.

TWIN SNAKES?

Q. I was just wondering if there was a chance that *Metal Gear Solid Twin Snakes* may be released for the PS2? I'd like to know before I buy a GameCube only to find out that the game would be coming out for PS2 later.

Alexmon
Via e-mail

A. Nein.

JET SET RADI-NOOOOOO

Q. I was just wondering if PS2 will ever get *Jet Set Radio Future*.

T.J.
Via e-mail

A. Non.

DRAGON'S LAIR?

Dragon's Lair 3D

Q. Last year there was talk about there being a *Dragon's Lair 3D* coming out for the PlayStation 2. Is it EVER going to come out? I know it's already out on the Xbox. Are they just trying to make it really special for the PS2? Do you think *Space Ace* and *DL II* will make it to the PS platform (maybe PS3?). I loved all those laserdisc games...even that stupid hologram one.

Jami Lunsford
Via e-mail

A. Khong.

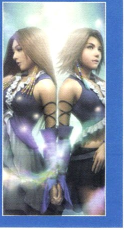
ANTI-WITCH?

Q. The first thing I did after I opened up last month's mag was go to the demo. But lo and behold, after playing for about three hours, I took a closer look at the disc holder and instead of the case saying *kill.switch*, it had "kill.witch." Does someone there hate witches?

Dragonbok22
Via e-mail

A. Guess what the answer is? No.

YUNA?



Q. In issue #75, on the page where you reviewed *Final Fantasy X-2*, who is the girl standing next to Yuna...it kinda looks like Yuna, but I don't think it is. Or is it?

Steve Harmer
Via e-mail

A. Ye—oh hold on. No.

PlayStation 2
25000
PlayStation 2
EyeToy
Includes
EyeToy Play
+
game disc
EyeToy USB camera

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

Disco Stars. One of 12 EyeToy: Play games that makes you the star. EyeToy puts you on-screen and its motion-tracking technology puts you in charge, letting your body control the action. Everyone can watch. Anyone can play. And you can **be on the TV**.

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

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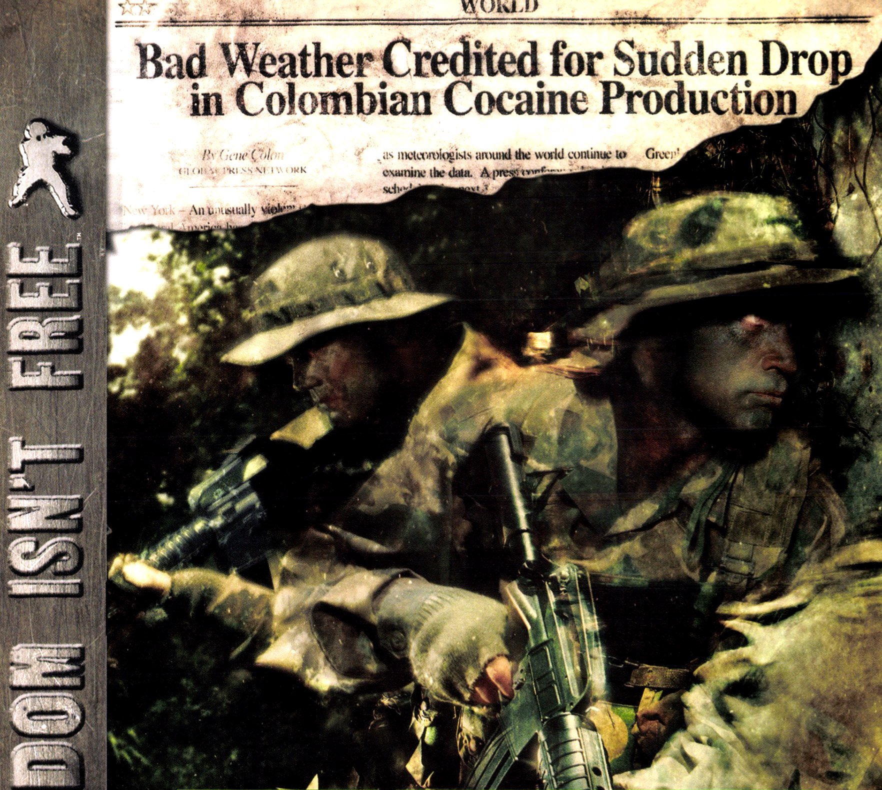


WORLD

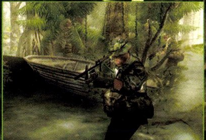
Bad Weather Credited for Sudden Drop in Colombian Cocaine Production

By Gene Colon
GLOBAL PRESS NETWORK

New York – An unusually violen

as meteorologists around the world continue to examine the data. A press confer

Green



EXPERIENCE NEW JUNGLE WARFARE AS THE GHOSTS RESTORE CUBA'S PEACE AND TAKE DOWN AN EVIL COLOMBIAN DRUG CARTEL.

JOIN INTENSE BATTLES WITH PLAYERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WITH THE NEW PLAYSTATION 2 ONLINE FUNCTIONALITY.

SHOUT OUT COMMANDS TO YOUR ELITE SQUAD OF GHOSTS USING STATE-OF-THE-ART VOICE COMMAND TECHNOLOGY.

THE MOST INTENSE, REALISTIC ACTION, NOW ONLINE FOR PLAYSTATION®2

Tom Clancy's
GHOST RECON™
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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Violence
PlayStation 2
ONLINE
BROADBAND ONLY
Red Storm
UBISOFT™

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MAX PAYNE 2

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"AN INTENSE STORY, AN INSANE AMOUNT OF DETAIL, AND EVEN MORE WONDERFUL GAMEPLAY."
GRADE: A. UGO

"AS ADRENALINE-PUMPING AS ANYTHING YOU'D SEE ON THE SILVER SCREEN."
★★★★★ GAMESPY

"STUNNING...MAX PAYNE 2 IS JUST A REMARKABLE PRODUCTION."
EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD. GAMESPOT

MAX PAYNE® 2

THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE

A FILM NOIR LOVE STORY

WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/MAXPAYNE2
WWW.MAXPAYNE2.COM

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Intense Violence
Strong Language
Blood
Mature Sexual Themes

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

PlayStation®2

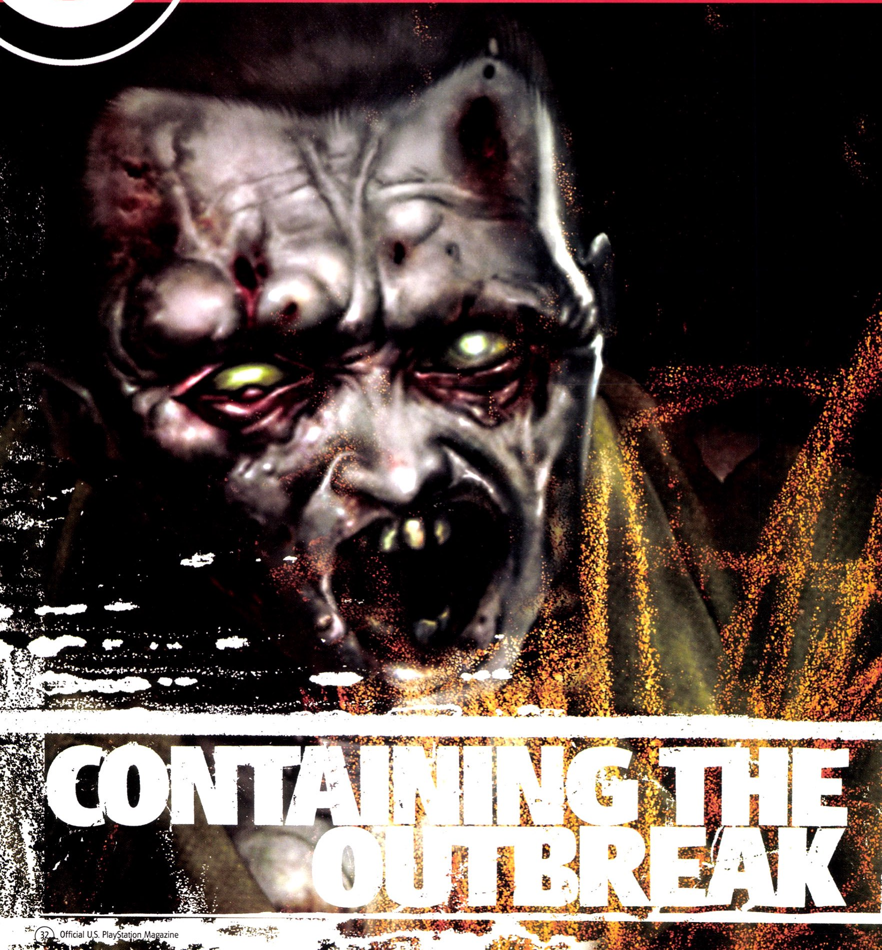
XBOX

REMEDY™

R★

SPIN

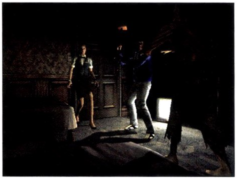
News, views, opinion, wit, and wisdom.



CONTAINING THE OUTBREAK

The *Resident Evil* series is taking its first jump into the world of online gaming with *Resident Evil Outbreak*. We had a chance to speak with the game's producer, Tsuyoshi Tanaka, to get his thoughts on adapting the survival-horror franchise for online play and to find out how he's making the new game just as spine tingling as its predecessors.

YOUR BEST FRIEND MAY BE YOUR WORST ENEMY



Why has Capcom decided to bring the *Resident Evil* series online?
It's been a long road to get to the actual creation point. What originally happened is that the original CEO of Capcom, Mr. Okamoto, told Shinji Mikami [the creator of the *Resident Evil* series] to "make a network *Resident Evil* game," but Mikami basically declined. Okamoto then approached Noritaka Funamizu, but he said no as well. The reason Okamoto went to Funamizu in the first place was because he created online play for *Street Fighter II*, and that worked really well. But everyone was saying that [online play and *Resident Evil*] just didn't fit together. However, one day, while I was sleeping, I came upon the idea of how to make an online version of *Resident Evil* work.

What was that idea?
Before the game was being worked on, there was that notion of making a massively multiplayer online game where people could be a zombie, a dog, or a human character. Then there are the *Dooms*, the *Quakes*, and the real-time strategy games—that's what the image of online gaming was. We had to break through that image and come up with something new, so I started to ask myself, what is fear? What is scary, or what can you make scary? What can you do to make online scary?

It occurred to us that the scariest thing we can use is the interaction between people. For example, let's say we have one person playing as a human character and another person playing as a dog. If we made it a shooting game, then it didn't have to be *Resident Evil*—it could be any other game. Again, it occurred to us that communication is scary. A friend could've been killed and turned into a zombie, and you could open a door thinking it was your friend, and he or she will start attacking you. You could also be waiting for a friend inside a room and he doesn't come; then you'll have decide if you want to leave and go out into another area filled with eight zombies. If you leave without your friend, he may think you're a jerk, so maybe you would stay in the room and wait. There are so many things that can go wrong, and a lot of it is based on communication. If you look at the original *Resident Evil*, you would always be wondering what was happening to the other character. We've been able to capture a similar feeling for this game.

How does communication function in *Resident Evil Outbreak*?
There are two ways to communicate: There's the Square button, which is used as the ad-lib chat, and then there's the right analog stick. The right analog stick will enter one of a few preset phrases, such as Yes, Come, Go, and Thanks—just basic things that people would use to communicate. These chat commands can only be used if you're in the same room. The ad-lib chat depends on the type of situation you're in, your health, the item you have, and the puzzle—so you press the button and your character will say something. There are many, many pages' worth of text. Sometimes you can press that button and the room you're in will briefly flash on the other players' map, so they'll know something is going on there. But it doesn't always mean you're going to die. It could mean that there's an ambush or a certain monster.

What about the single-player game? How do you keep the communication element as prevalent?
Basically, the computer-controlled characters will follow you around, but they're not always going to cooperate with you. It's almost like a pseudo-Internet because you don't know if you're going to get a good player or a bad player. Sometimes you'll get characters who will follow [you] and do what you say, but there will be others who don't respond to your commands. Some characters will help you when you're attacked, but even then, some will do it sooner while others will take more time—or not help you at all.

Does the gameplay change depending on the type of character players are using?
There are two types of characters: the ones who can run into battle and the ones who should stay away from battle. The higher levels have fewer healing items and weapons, so it depends on how you use the character's abilities. A character good at healing needs to stay in the back to heal the ones who are good at fighting. Also, if you're the type of person who wants to play through the game once as a single character, then you'll be missing out because each character has his own cut-scenes and ending movies.

What is the structure of the game like? Is there a lot of backtracking, or is it relatively linear?
It's very similar to the other *Resident Evil* games. People who have played the game up to now have said that it's very much like the original *Resident Evil* in terms of fear. There are five different scenarios with different directors, so you're going to get a different game style with each one. It's like the differences between *Resident Evil 1, 2, 3*, and *Veronica*, because they have different directors and different perspectives. You'll get some that are suspenseful and Hitchcock-like, but others [that] are just pure scare scenarios like the original *Resident Evil*.

Any future plans for *Resident Evil Outbreak*, such as expansions or sequels?
Using that system and network, we could make a lot of cool games [smiles].

www.hometheaterhifi.com
Go here to learn all about progressive scan DVDs and other sorts of home theater junk.

Financial Fantasy Delay
As of press time, Square Enix revealed that *Final Fantasy XII* would not be released in 2004, citing development delays and possible product conflicts. Be sure to check out www.1UP.com on November 19 for the latest on *Final Fantasy XII*.

THE OUTSIDER

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

When you travel like I do, it's a genuine hassle to drag around unnecessary stuff like a PS2. You need to make space for it, plus add extra time for packing and airport security. And when you arrive at your hotel, you almost always get a steaming bag of poo for your trouble. Frankly, I wouldn't bother at all if the PS2 wasn't also a DVD player.

Is it a pain? Most certainly. Is it worth it? Maybe.

When you hit the road, be sure to bring both a standard PS2 A/V cable and an RF converter, since you're usually faced with coaxial-only televisions. Even if you end up with one of the two out of 10 hotel sets that have A/V inputs, they won't work half the time because the set has been reprogrammed. Bummer. Often, you'll need a three-outlet AC plug and a short extension cord as well.

You'll have to deal with cable locks at almost all hotels—these people think you're going to pirate Spank-vision exclusives. Gimme a break. So, if you've got cable locks and no A/V inputs, you might be done. Hotels across America have refused to remove those cable locks for me. I suppose if you're Bono or in the NBA or something, it would be a different story, but I've been screwed.

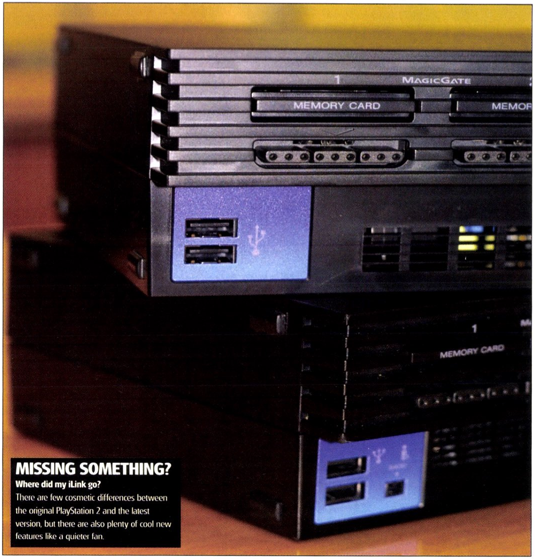
Even if you hook everything up fine, the first thing you'll notice is the dark picture. That's because any hotel television with Lodge-Net or On-Command has a default brightness setting of 50 percent. So, watching some DVDs becomes pointless. And unless the games you're playing have brightness control in the options menu, you're screwed. Even then, it's still too dark for sneaking around in *Splinter Cell* or cruising Vice City at night. To complicate matters, you can only alter brightness with a "master remote." The hotel engineer should know where to find it and how it works, but most of these guys are figuring it out for the first time when I check in.

Imagine going through all of this after a long flight and a two-hour drive...just to get it all rigged a whole after-noon before showtime amd anxiously fire up the long-awaited new *Tomb Raider*. But most of the time it's worth it, or I wouldn't bother.

My favorite trick is to get a loaner TV set from a hotel's conference room or A/V department—it comes on a cart, has its own remote and A/V inputs, and is free from the pay-per-view B.S. The hotel may be happy to send it right up, no hassles—or they may want to charge you a $125 rental fee. I suppose if you're Bono, you just pay it every time and be done with it. But then, I have a hard time believing Bono would go through any of this crap.

I, however, am one of rock's greatest gamers. And I am stuck in some hotel, thousands of miles from all responsibility, with the latest games, new demos, magazines, codes.... Now, what in the hell is showtime?

Singer for the Gin Blossoms, Robin Wilson (rwginblossom@aol.com), knows more about games than Bono.



MISSING SOMETHING?
Where did my iLink go?
There are few cosmetic differences between the original PlayStation 2 and the latest version, but there are also plenty of cool new features like a quieter fan.

WHAT'S NEW, PS2?

Sony quietly ships the latest version of the PS2 hardware.

Check out some of the changes and upgrades in the latest version of the PlayStation 2.

In the Box

The new model, which retails for $179, comes with all the basic items, including a single controller, a power cable, and audio/video cables. What you won't find is a built-in network adapter. Sony sells a separate network-adapter bundle that comes in a black box, but that package doesn't include the latest version of the hardware. If you want to make sure you're buying the new hardware, look for the number SCPH-5001 at the bottom of the box.

Cleaner Picture

The SCPH-5001 version features full progressive-scan playback. That means the image from a DVD movie is drawn all at once on the screen, as opposed to the interlaced line-by-line method used by the older model. You'll get a cleaner picture, but unfortunately, you need a television that supports 480p in order to enjoy it.

Shoosh!

This may not seem like a big deal to most, but the fan that cools the hardware inside the new PS2 model has also been changed. The result is a quiet system that makes noise only when the disc drive is attempting to access data off a DVD or a game.

Bye! Bye!

The iLink port on the front of the system has been removed. This feature originally let you hook up two PS2s to play head-to-head on two separate televisions in games like *Gran Turismo 3*, but few used it, and it only added to the manufacturing costs, so Sony got rid of it. The two USB ports for the headset, microphones, and other devices are still there, as you can see in the photo.

More Functionality

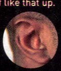
If you only use the DualShock controller to navigate DVDs, then you know how much of a pain it is to fast-forward and reverse through a disc. Fortunately, Sony has added some new functionality, including multiple fast-forward and reverse speeds that can be used with the PS2 controller. There are also new Shuffle, Program, Repeat, and Playlist options when playing a DVD, audio CD, or a CD-RW.

No More Switching

Since the original PlayStation 2 didn't have an infrared sensor built in, you had to plug an attachment into one of the memory card slots. You don't need to worry about that anymore, since the IR port is already installed near the front of the system.

www.rankinbass.com
This website is devoted to the artistic geniuses behind the *Rudolph* and *Frosty* Christmas specials. They also created the *Thundercats*. Snarf!

DATEBOOK
DECEMBER 2K3

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
OPM*'s three favorite animated Christmas TV specials:** 1. ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer 2. ***How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*** 3. ***A Charlie Brown Christmas*** Check your local listings for airtimes.	1 **Britney Spears** turns 22 tomorrow. She still appears to be in fine shape. 	2 ***Deer Hunter, Max Payne 2, Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2, The Sims: Bustin' Out, FunkMaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory,*** and ***Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space*** all come out today. Yep, this confirms that all the good games came out in November.	3	4	5 ***Honey***, a movie about a girl from the Bronx who wants to be a dancer, opens today. No thanks... oh, wait, it stars *Dark Angel*'s **Jessica Alba**. Let's get in line now. **Frankie Muniz** turns 18 today. To celebrate, he'll grow another 6 inches.	6 **St. Nicholas Day** Children in Sweden fill their shoes with sausages and squish them up with their feet, or some dumb custom.
7 **Anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.** We're curious to see how ***Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*** will sell in Japan.	8 Today is **Take it in the Ear Day**. It truly is. We couldn't possibly make stuff like that up.  Can you name this celebrity who "took it in the ear?" (answer below)	9 ***World Championship Pool 2004, Mission Impossible: Operation Surma***, and ***R: Racing Evolution*** wind it up for a lackluster month of PS2 releases.	10 	11	12 ***Stuck on You***, the latest **Farrelly Brothers** flick, is out. We hope it's more like ***Dumb and Dumber*** and less like ***Me, Myself and Irene***.	13 **Ted Nugent**'s birthday. Think he'd like ***Cabela's Dangerous Hunts***?
14 We didn't really have a reason to run this pic of Jason with his Gloomy Bear again, other than that it brings a smile to our face. 	15	16 It's **National Chocolate-Covered Anything Day**. It's also **William "The Refrigerator" Perry**'s birthday. We don't even want to think about what he'll be covering in chocolate. 	17 A little independent flick opens today. We're trying to help foster some word-of-mouth buzz on it. It's called ***The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King***. Check it out.	18 In yet another vapid effort to try to upstage Britney, **Christina Aguilera** dons her birthday cake with one more candle than Spears' had.		20 **Hannukah** begins tonight and continues through Dec. 27. Celebrate by watching all those great animated Hannukah specials. Oh wait, there aren't any. Unless you count ***Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights***, which we don't, since it sucks.
21 **Kiefer Sutherland** turns 37 today, which means he'd only have been 16 when he fathered Elisha Cuthbert on ***24***.	22 **Winter Solstice**. Tip a reindeer on its side and remove its antlers. We're sure Santa won't make you rot in hell with these guys. 	23 ***The Last Samurai***, with **Tom Cruise**, came out a couple weeks ago. If *Lord of the RIngs* is still sold out, you should go see that. Good seats will certainly be available.	24 **Christmas Eve** **Dido** was born on Christmas. We bet she hated Christmas growing up. Everyone probably tried to give her one "big" present instead of two. People born on Dec. 25 HATE that. At least that's what **Sir Isaac Newton** told us.			27 Happy Belated **Boxing Day** to our Canadian pals.
28 **Classic household hints from *OPM*:** Remove scratches from DVDs by placing them in the microwave. The intense heat melts the plastic layer, repairing any defects. It also stops kittens from meowing.	29	30 Plop-plop Fizz-fizz. It's **Bicarbonate of Soda Day**. Hooray! 	31 **New Year's Eve**			

Evander Holyfield, after Mike Tyson bit his ear off during a boxing match.

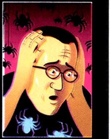
www.uspto.gov
Want to find out if someone has a patent on your awesome idea for a new type of toaster? Look no further!

Doom and Gloom

Doom co-creator John Romero has signed on as project lead and lead designer for a yet-to-be-announced Midway game. But we'll give you a little hint as to what the it might be. It starts with a "g" and ends with an "auntlet."

THE WATCHDOG

VIRTUAL THERAPY



My mother-in-law, bless her heart, has this thing about spiders. As in, she hates them. Really, all you have to do is say the word "spider" and she gets a twitch and looks at you sourly, as if to ask why you want to be so mean. She doesn't even like watching spiders in movies: She got the last *Harry Potter* flick on DVD but skips right past the part where the man-sized spider tries to eat Harry and Ron. I don't know what she'll do when she goes to see *Return of the King* and meets up with Shelob. No, I haven't told her about Shelob yet. I figure I'll let it be a surprise.

What might a doctor tell her about her phobia? Well, one answer might be, play a videogame. Researchers in Canada published a report in the October issue of the medical journal *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, in which they modified off-the-shelf video games like *Half-Life* and *Unreal Tournament* to create environments specifically designed to address phobias.

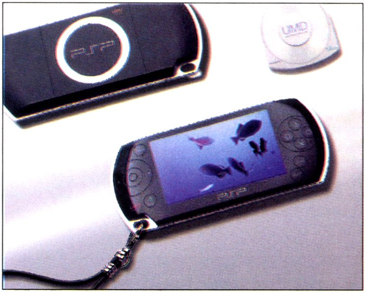
For people who had a fear of heights, for example, they modified *UT* to create a scenario in which people were "standing" on an extremely tall construction crane. For those with a fear of spiders, they modified *Half-Life* to display animated spiders. The idea was to encourage those with phobias to get as close to the real fears as possible. Incidentally, in case you were wondering, no, arachnophobics didn't have a chance to kill the bugs: "In each of the environments, irrelevant distractions such as guns, explosions, and enemies were deleted."

These sort of mods turn out to be useful in a number of ways. First, the mods are "real" enough to invoke some anxiety—which is necessary for learning to overcome fears—but as the environments are virtual, there is some control over how things work. That's an ideal combination. Another advantage is the price: While VR rigs have been around for years, helping people with their phobias, many of these rigs were specialized and expensive setups. Creating mods, on the other hand, is cheap. This means that more people could potentially use such a treatment. Considering that the study's authors note that more than 10 percent of people have a phobia of some sort, this is also probably a good thing.

Cheap, accessible, and useful treatment—thanks to videogames. Unless, of course, you have cyberphobia: fear of computers.

(Want to see the mods for yourself? They're here: www.uqo.ca/cyberpsy/prod_en.htm. To view the study, go to: www.ingentaselect.com/ and search for "Anxiety and Presence during VR Immersion.")

Don't be scriptophobic—write to John Scalzi at **john@scalzi.com** *or leave your comments on the* OPM *message boards at* **1UP.com**.



A PEEK AT PSP

Not quite what we expected, but cool nonetheless

Sony showed off an early concept model of the PSP at a meeting for investors in New York. It was initially suspected that the PSP would look somewhat similar to Sony's line of CLIÉ PDAs, but it bears a stronger resemblance to Nokia's N-Gage and TapWave's Zodiac portable. The button configuration is essentially the same as the original PlayStation controller's, and while the apparent lack of analog control may be disconcerting to some, it's worth noting that there's a small button on the left side of the device that reads "analog." The recessed button/D-pad design seems like a potentially annoying factor as well, but the large screen is perfect for the types of media the PSP is capable of playing.

So, where does the Universal Media Disc go? The concept model indicates that you can simply load the disc in the back of the unit, but again, the design is early and the final product will more than likely be different.

Ken Kutaragi, executive deputy president and head of the gaming division at Sony, re-emphasized the multiple capabilities of the PSP platform. In addition to playing movies and games, the PSP can play digital music. As such, the company plans to market the PSP toward the Apple iPod crowd, though a separate, cheaper music player will also be available. Meanwhile, the device's telecommunications features will allow the PSP to compete directly with phone-and-gaming hybrids like the N-Gage—even though such competition may be nonexistent by the time the PSP comes out next year.

New details about the PSP will continue to trickle in over the next few months, including information on what will be available for the device at launch. However, Sony still plans to show the first physical prototype of the device at E3 2004.

EMOTIONALLY BANKRUPT

Poindexters take issue with Emotion Engine

The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF—no, not the *Star Trek* character) has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Wisconsin against Sony and Toshiba. The lawsuit alleges that the two companies disregarded a patent in manufacturing the Emotion Engine (the chip that powers the PlayStation 2), so WARF is seeking financial compensation. These guys sound like they're troublemakers, but then, we suppose we would be, too if we'd patented something that controls the movement of *atoms* in a CPU. This isn't the first time WARF has filed a lawsuit to protect its patent. Similar cases were brought against Intel and other companies but were eventually settled out of court.

DATA STREAM

Vroom! Vroom!

Electronic Arts has purchased Studio 33. The development house has worked on quite a few racing games, including two Formula One titles. The purchase won't affect the development of *Destruction Derby Arenas*.

Kiss and Make Up!

Dave Mirra has settled his lawsuit against Acclaim for *BMX XXX*. Oddly enough, no money was involved, and Mirra will remain under contract with Acclaim until 2011. Now, let's all have a big hug!

Eye See Money

Sony has sold over one million units of *EyeToy: Play* in Europe within four months. The next game to be released for the peripheral in Europe is *EyeToy: Groove*.

Name Game

Konami announced the opening of a new branch, called Konami Digital Entertainment, in Los Angeles, which will function as the global headquarters for its videogame business.

FINAL FANTASY X-2

LIMITED EDITION STRATEGY GUIDE

THE GUIDE
THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

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POINTLESS QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"With music, I don't have to be silent." —Vanessa Carlton on why she chose a music career over ballet.

Photo by Corbis/Outline Matthew Jordan Smith

SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION

Vanessa Carlton plays rough in SpyHunter 2

Piano prodigies are all the same: talented, brainy, and charismatic. Unlike heroes Mozart and Chopin, though, 23-year-old Vanessa Carlton also cuts a fine sight in a string bikini. We cornered the Grammy-nominated entertainer, who performs the theme song to Midway's *SpyHunter 2*, for a brief but memorable jam session. *–Scott Steinberg*

Why *SpyHunter* and not *My Street*? Does a certain little sexpot have a weakness for intrigue?
Hunting for spies is something that I've always enjoyed. I've had a taste for danger since I was 2. I think I get it from my dad—he's a pilot and occasionally enjoys jumping out of planes. I'm dangerous but no one knows it, which makes me even more diabolical [cackles menacingly].

Given that you're intimately familiar with this classic franchise, what does it mean to you?
It means my brother thinks I'm cool. I also like the chick in the second one.

Would you consider yourself much of a gamer?
Not really. I'm lucky if I can get on the Internet. It's too high tech for me now. People are wearing headgear and goggles while playing! Like, hello, what's up with that? I prefer the good old-fashioned Nintendo sessions. Just me, Mario, and a beer.

What went into designing the title track for this game?
It was actually an old song that I completely reworked for the game. It's kind of electronica-esque by design. I've always wanted to write about espionage.

Cute, but some would say the topic is a little geeky. Speaking of which, what's the dorkiest thing you've ever done?
I am the definition of all that is cool [winks mischievously]. I do mildly dorky things daily. All hail the dorks! As a group, we're underrated. Which, of course, makes us supremely cool.

Any particular sources of inspiration you drew from?
My inspiration was the game. Duh.

Plan on becoming more involved in gaming in the future, perhaps even as a playable character?
Sure, I'll be the ninja chick with small, round breasts. Don't even try making 'em bigger. I'm stickin' to what I've got.

What makes you so confident in your pert-bosomed potential as an interactive heroine?
If I believe in something, I'll fight to the death. Plus, I can always serenade the enemy into a corner and then proceed to beat the sh–t out of 'em. No one expects the piano chick to be a ball breaker...little do they know [performs disturbing cackle again].

SHIFT INTO
SOMETHING
MORE LETHAL
MIDWAY

"With huge levels, branching paths and different styles of gameplay, this isn't a half-assed sequel. It's a tricked-out and expanded new chapter of a burgeoning series."

- IGN

SPY HUNTER 2

THE HUNT BEGINS AGAIN

The hunt begins at spyhunter2.midway.com

Coming November 21, 2003

Take control of the all-new and fully loaded G-8155 Interceptor. Transform into new vehicles such as a sleek snowmobile and off-road 4x4.

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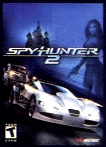


PlayStation 2

XBOX

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

[illegible] Orchestrated and Conducted by Henry Mancini. Published by Northridge [illegible] registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or in [illegible]

YUMMY! If Sonic is a normal hedgehog, he eats plants, fruits, insects, mice, frogs, small birds, worms, caterpillars, slugs, toads, eggs, and even small snakes.

QUICK FIX

Nine reasons Sonic Heroes will be the Blue Blur's best game since the Genesis days

1. IT FEELS LIKE 2D IN 3D

Sonic Heroes is the first game to capture the feel of Sonic's old 2D games in a 3D environment. Mario and his clones never overshadowed Sonic in the pre-Sony days, because Sega's games offered a totally unique twist on the action-platform mold. The same holds true today. *Sonic Heroes* feels nothing like current console champs *Jak* and *Ratchet*; it's all about speed in this game, much like in the 16-bit classics. Sonic and company aren't interested in stopping to sniff the roses (or fetch the baubles)—they're trained to kick ass, take names, and break the sound barrier.

2. NONE OF THAT "ADVENTURE" CRAP

It's been awhile since Sonic starred in an all-out action game. *Sonic Adventure*, Blue's Dreamcast debut, was fun only when the good guys were running. The game's "adventure" elements offered nothing more than tiresome fetch quests in ugly, empty environments. *Sonic Heroes* keeps to the good stuff without making players trudge through momentum-killing search-a-thons.

3. IT'S NO WEAK-SAUCE DREAMCAST PORT

Sure, GameCube hosted *Sonic* games first, but those releases are nothing more than reheated leftovers originally designed for less-powerful hardware. There hasn't been a truly new *Sonic* title in years, and the adrenaline-pumping *Sonic Heroes* should provide the real boost the franchise has needed since side-scrollers went the way of the dodo.

4. YOU DO MORE THAN JUST PRESS UP

Instead of controlling one character, *Sonic Heroes* puts you in simultaneous control of three furballs. Each has his or her own set of skills, and you need to master the move set of each if you're to stand a chance against Dr. Robotnik. All told, you can throw fireballs, fly through the air, create whirlwinds, and bounce off walls. That's quite a step up from simply being able to make sure Sonic keeps running.

5. IT'S GOT REAL PUZZLES

Like *Ico* and *Whiplash*, you need to use your pals to solve certain puzzles. These are never complex enough to irritate you, but they break up the action just enough to keep you from getting dizzy.

6. NO FISHING! NO DIGGING!

Those "other" 3D *Sonic* games made us hate Knuckles and Big the Cat; their missions were long, sloppy, and boring. Good guys in *Sonic* should never be forced to take time out to fish or play Marco Polo in the mud.

7. IT CHALLENGES YOU, NOT FRUSTRATES

Nostalgia goes a long way when it comes to replaying the original *Sonic* games, but it's hard to ignore that they were too short and too easy, even back in the day. *Sonic Heroes* gives you plenty to do, with nice, long stages and challenges unafraid to test your mettle.

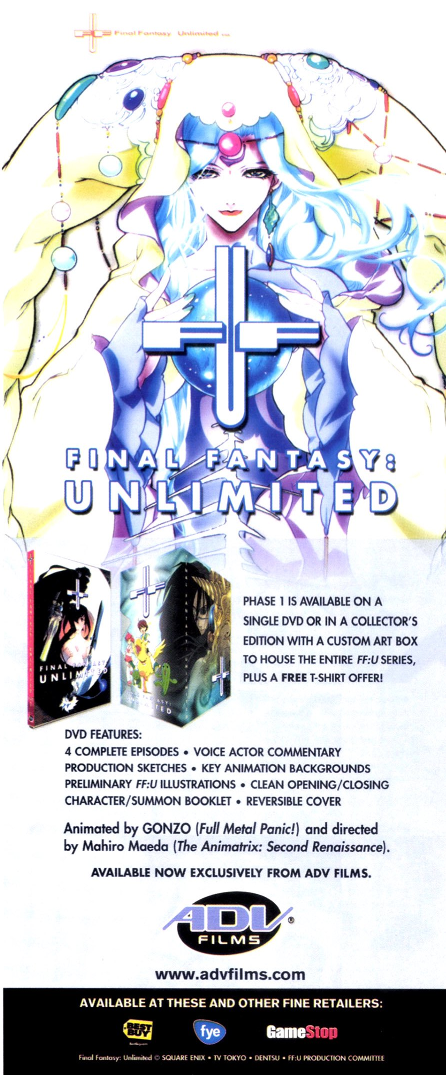
8. THE CAMERA DOESN'T SUCK

This is the only *Sonic* game in existence with a truly workable screen perspective. It's impossible to run at full speed in the original Genesis games without banging into something you couldn't see coming, and the early 3D games' cameras redefined "bad" (especially when you were inside buildings). We haven't once struggled with the camera in *Sonic Heroes*.

9. OLD SCHOOL = COOL

Heroes contains a ton of references to earlier games, from the expected (familiar sound effects and casino stages) to the surprising (characters from the *Knuckles Chaotix* 32X game and a revamped Green Hill Zone from the original game). It's also nice to see that Sonic hasn't gone dark and edgy. This is the 'hog in classic form, 'tude and all. He's still fighting Robotnik, he's still collecting rings, he's still performing loop-de-loops. And we still care.

4 Remaining DVD copies of *Sonic the Hedgehog: The Movie* available for purchase from Amazon.com as of press time. Hurry!



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FUN WITH ANAGRAMS

Play with the letters in "Yuji Naka" and you get "a A.I. junky." Not grammatically accurate, but quite possibly true.

SPEEDSTER

Sega's website refers to the company as the "house that Yuji Naka built." Who are we to argue? As part of the company since the '80s, Naka has played a key role in such classic series as *Phantasy Star*, *NiGHTS*, *Burning Rangers*, and, of course, *Sonic*. Currently busy finishing up *Sonic Heroes*, Naka was kind enough to answer some of our questions about the relevance of his furry blue gaming icon, his influences, and just why the heck it took so long for Sonic to hit PS2.

OPM: How did the idea for *Sonic Heroes* come about?

Naka: Whereas the *Sonic Adventure* series was more "adventure," this game is going back to pure action. The idea behind *Sonic Heroes* was to extend our action game back to its roots while establishing a more dynamic style of play for the gamer. We focused on team action, where the user is able to utilize each of the character's strengths as they play through each of the action stages. We believe that team action provides a new game experience for all platform users.

With all the new platformers hitting the market, do you think the *Sonic* brand carries the same weight that it did, say, four or five years ago?

Yes. In fact, I think the *Sonic* brand carries even more weight because it is poised to go multiplatform and has expanded to include a hit cartoon and extremely successful global cross-promotions. I am also confident that *Sonic Heroes* will be welcomed by many game fans new to the franchise.

What is it that still makes Sonic such a popular character for well over a decade?

Sonic maintains a high level of popularity because people share a special bond with him, and of course, so do we. I think if he were a real person, he would be a nice guy with a positive attitude. I certainly hope everyone else thinks so, too.

How difficult is it to come up with new ideas for the franchise without deviating too far from its defining characteristics?

It is not difficult for us to generate new ideas because Sonic is a character that we created. It is great fun for us to introduce changes and new ideas to push the franchise and industry forward. On the other hand, I assume that it would be very difficult it we were trying to do the same thing with a character created by others.

What would you say has influenced you most as a developer?

There is not one specific point of influence. I have always been influenced by all elements of the entertainment business. It may be games, movies, or toys. I have the utmost respect for the creator.

What advice do you have for aspiring game makers?

Continue to create new content that surprises people.

What would you be doing if you weren't a game developer?

Mmmm...maybe an electrician. That is my father's job.

If you could remake any of your games, which one would it be?

It would be *Girls Garden*, which was a title just for girls on SG-1000. This was the first experience I had creating content by myself for Sega's hardware.

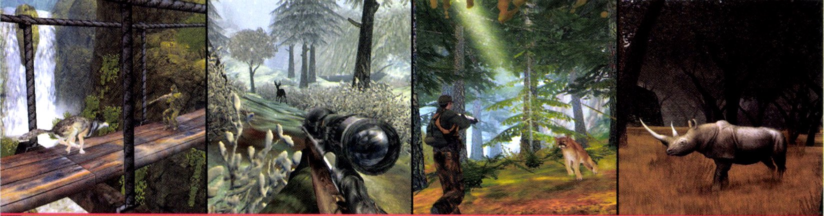
If you could pick only one game of yours for future generations to enjoy, which would it be?

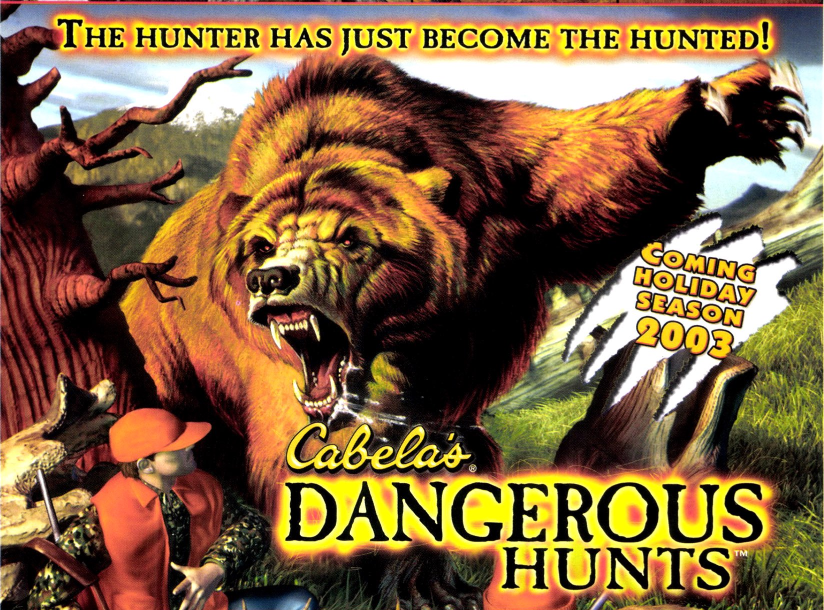
Sonic the Hedgehog, of course. I believe this game has important significance for both Sega and myself.

So, why *did* it take so long for Sonic to make the jump to PS2?

I believe that this was a Sonic decision. You never know where he is going to run [*smiles*].

Yuji Naka
President, Sonic Team
Career Highlights: *Phantasy Star* series, *Sonic* series, *NiGHTS*, *Burning Rangers*

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

www.us.playstation.com

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JAK II™

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It ain't no namby pamby fairyland, pal. It's a whole new kind of evil. Crawling with ruthless dictators, backstabbing allies and blood thirsty freaks with an appetite for extra rare meat. All pansies kindly tippy toe on out of here. This requires someone with serious ass-kicking savvy. And that someone, my friend, is Jak. This time he's pissed off and battle ready, with a frighteningly large gun, get-the-hell-outta-my-way hoverboard and a nasty case of mutant powers. So please, save yourself the detached appendages and let him handle it.

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TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Violence

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EYE ON THE FUTURE

What's next for Eye Toy

Call it revolutionary, call it a novelty, call it goofy—Eye Toy is certainly something new. But spend some time with Eye Toy: *Play* disc and you'll find yourself daydreaming not about what Eye Toy does, but what it *could* do. Desperate for visions of emerging technologies, we visited Dr. Richard Marks, inventor of Eye Toy, for an exclusive preview of the technology for the next round of Eye Toy applications. We walked away stunned by the possibilities.

After polishing off *Play*, the Eye Toy team began work on new applications they could present to third-party developers for generating ideas of how to incorporate Eye Toy into upcoming games. (Thus, it must be stressed that it's possible none of these applications will actually make it into any commercial releases.)

Much of the unseen potential of Eye Toy revolves around physical objects that the camera can be designed to recognize. One demo was set in a medieval-looking chamber; laid out on a table were a torch, a sword, and a morningstar. After a brief calibration sequence, each of these items—or all three at once—could be manipulated by moving brightly colored physical props (a Nerf bat, for example), paving the way for, say, a more interactive baseball (or hack-n-slash) experience.

Another significant prop-based application involves something Marks calls "the clam": a simple, curved piece of foam. By training Eye Toy to recognize its size and color, the clam can be used as an intuitive, surprisingly accurate mouse pointer. Just move it around in space to scroll through menus, then squeeze it shut to approximate a mouse click. You can even twist it on its axis to rotate images, switch menus, and so on. A different-colored clam in each hand could allow the user to grab, twist, and distort objects and images quickly and easily. For an idea of this simple system's potential, picture a real-time strategy in which you could physically reach out and grab one of your units and move him to a new position.

The key element in using props is that Eye Toy can be calibrated to recognize the size of the object, which means it can easily determine how close to the camera the object is simply by comparing the relative size to the calibrated size. The technology for allowing Eye Toy to track an object's movement in 3D space is already in place. But how best to represent this on a 2D screen?

GET YOUR GROOVE ON

In the more immediate future, the U.K. is about to see the release of Eye Toy: *Groove*, a dance-rhythm game. Unlike *Dance Dance Revolution*, *Groove* requires no special dance pad; instead, players simply touch targets that surround the screen, in time to 25 licensed songs. Surprisingly, though, Sony won't confirm that we'll see a release here.

One possibility can be seen in one of the most intriguing demos: a real-time stereoscopic 3D image. To create this, a second Eye Toy is plugged into a PS2, the images from the two cameras are aligned, and then one signal turns blue and the other red. Pop on a standard pair of red/blue 3D glasses and voilà—suddenly, you're looking at an image of yourself coming *out* of your TV, and you can reach out and shake your own hand.

These technology demonstrations are just the tip of the iceberg for Eye Toy. The possibilities of a "controller-free controller" pave the way for a never-before-seen level of interactivity. Picture a first-person shooter in which a simple head movement allows you to peek around corners...or a virtual pottery wheel in which your hand motions create intricate 3D sculptures...or a *Spider-Man* game in which a flick of the wrist shoots webbing from your palm. We may not see these exact implementations, but one thing is certain: Eye Toy has the power to change forever the way games are played.

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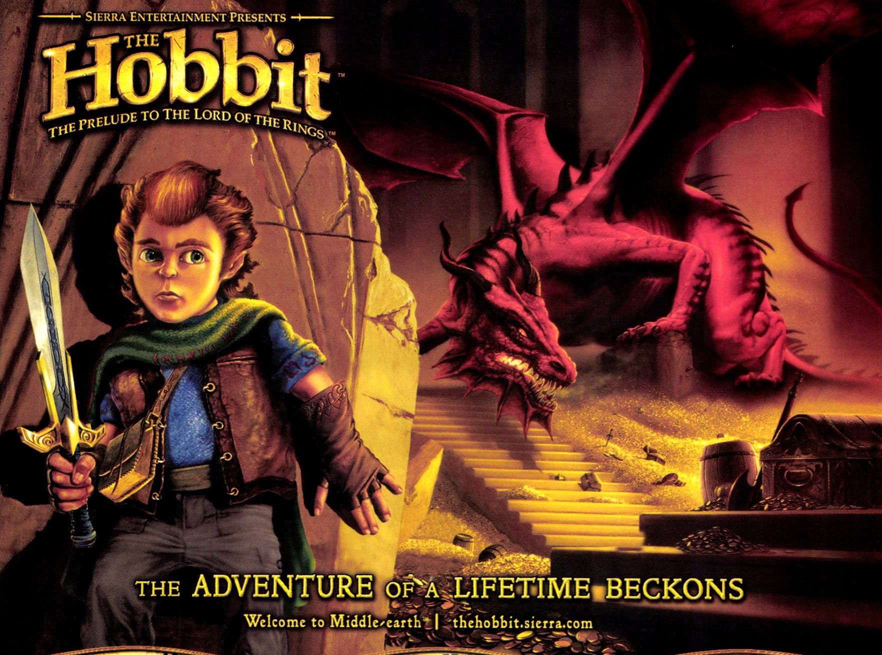

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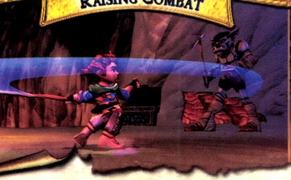
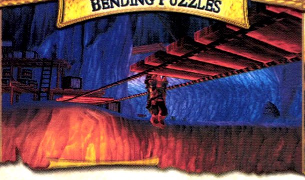


SOLVE MIND-BENDING PUZZLES



EXPLORE MIDDLE-EARTH

Long ago, the Lonely Mountain trembled as the Dragon Smaug destroyed the Dwarf-kingdom in fire and rage. Now, the Dwarves set out upon an epic quest to reclaim their stolen treasures. And I, Gandalf the wizard, send with them the most unlikely of heroes: you, Bilbo Baggins of the Shire.

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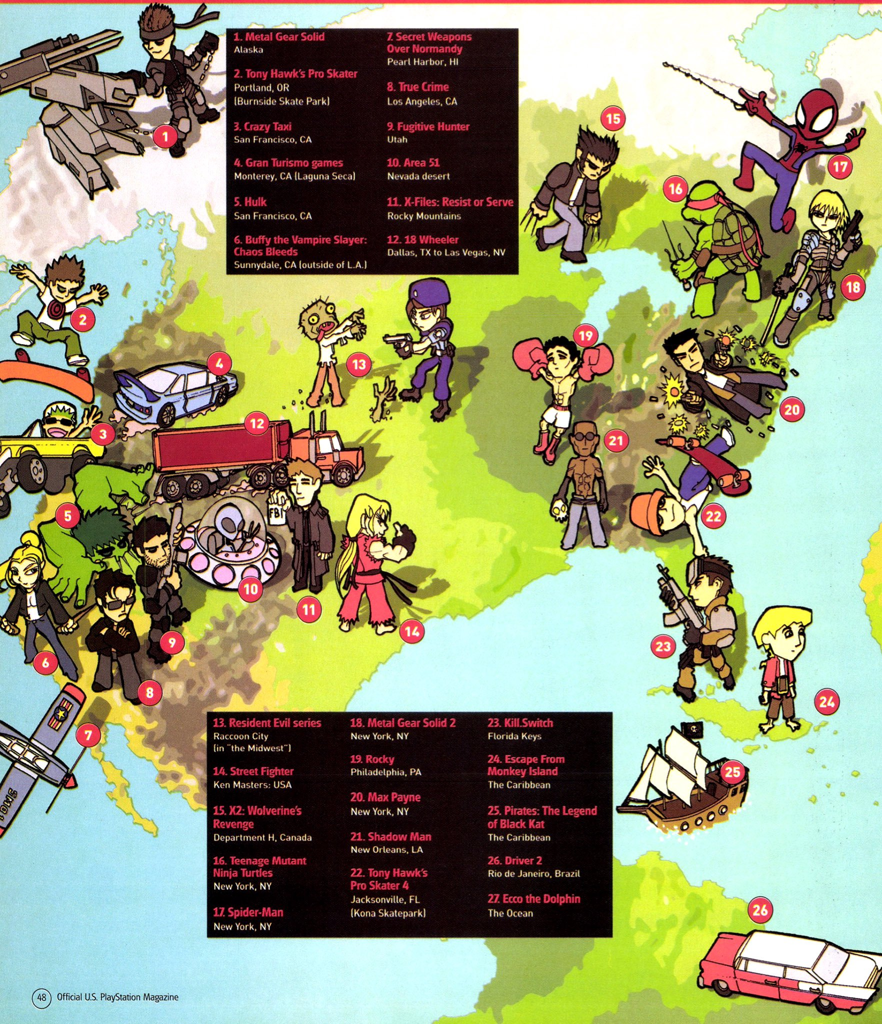
A gaming atlas, at last.

36,198 Greatest known depth of the ocean, in feet. Ecco can't quite make it there.



1. Metal Gear Solid
Alaska

2. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
Portland, OR
(Burnside Skate Park)

3. Crazy Taxi
San Francisco, CA

4. Gran Turismo games
Monterey, CA (Laguna Seca)

5. Hulk
San Francisco, CA

6. Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds
Sunnydale, CA (outside of L.A.)

7. Secret Weapons Over Normandy
Pearl Harbor, HI

8. True Crime
Los Angeles, CA

9. Fugitive Hunter
Utah

10. Area 51
Nevada desert

11. X-Files: Resist or Serve
Rocky Mountains

12. 18 Wheeler
Dallas, TX to Las Vegas, NV

13. Resident Evil series
Raccoon City
(in "the Midwest")

14. Street Fighter
Ken Masters: USA

15. X2: Wolverine's Revenge
Department H, Canada

16. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
New York, NY

17. Spider-Man
New York, NY

18. Metal Gear Solid 2
New York, NY

19. Rocky
Philadelphia, PA

20. Max Payne
New York, NY

21. Shadow Man
New Orleans, LA

22. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Jacksonville, FL
(Kona Skatepark)

23. Kill.Switch
Florida Keys

24. Escape From Monkey Island
The Caribbean

25. Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat
The Caribbean

26. Driver 2
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

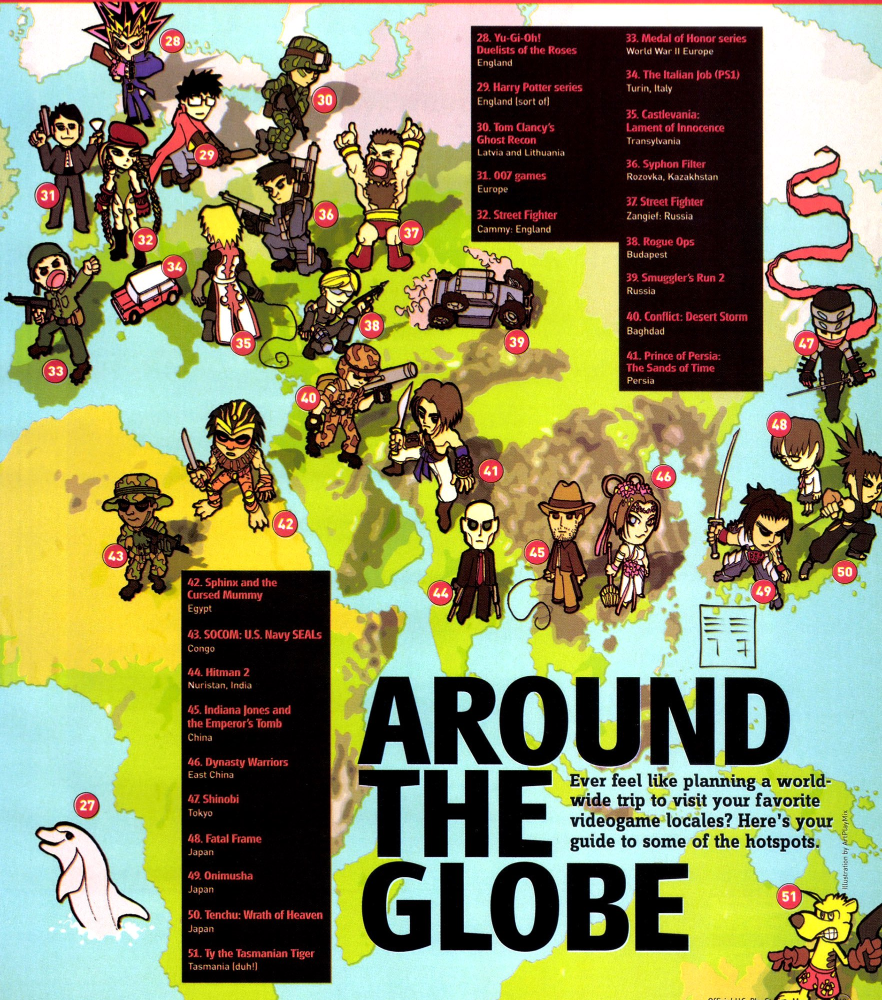
27. Ecco the Dolphin
The Ocean

1918 As many Belmonts know, the year when Transylvania changed from being part of Hungary to being part of Romania.

2 Cents per acre the U.S. paid Russia when it purchased Alaska for $7.2 million in October 1867. Zangief must be pissed.

AROUND THE GLOBE

Ever feel like planning a worldwide trip to visit your favorite videogame locales? Here's your guide to some of the hotspots.



28. Yu-Gi-Oh! Duelists of the Roses
England

29. Harry Potter series
England (sort of)

30. Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon
Latvia and Lithuania

31. 007 games
Europe

32. Street Fighter
Cammy: England

33. Medal of Honor series
World War II Europe

34. The Italian Job (PS1)
Turin, Italy

35. Castlevania: Lament of Innocence
Transylvania

36. Syphon Filter
Rozovka, Kazakhstan

37. Street Fighter
Zangief: Russia

38. Rogue Ops
Budapest

39. Smuggler's Run 2
Russia

40. Conflict: Desert Storm
Baghdad

41. Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time
Persia

42. Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy
Egypt

43. SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs
Congo

44. Hitman 2
Nuristan, India

45. Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb
China

46. Dynasty Warriors
East China

47. Shinobi
Tokyo

48. Fatal Frame
Japan

49. Onimusha
Japan

50. Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven
Japan

51. Ty the Tasmanian Tiger
Tasmania (duh!)

Illustration by ArtPlayMix

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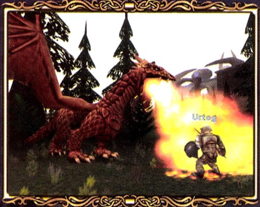

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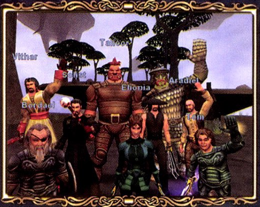

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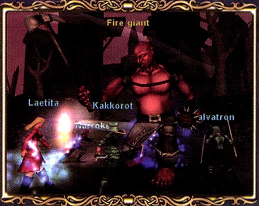

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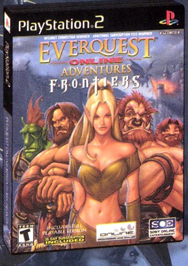

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★★★★ Music games depend on...the music. *Amplitude* rocks our world with its diverse selection of killer tunes.

PLAYABLE ON DEATH

Hard-rock heroes P.O.D. are ready to change the game

Let it be known that 5-million-album-selling San Diego rap-rock outfit P.O.D. compromises for no one. From experimental singles to steadfast pride in its members' status as born-again Christians, the pioneering quartet has retained its identity in a sea of transposable nü-metal peers. And once again, the band has forged ahead where others only dream, debuting a long-awaited third album on Atlantic Records, *Payable on Death*, as the first record ever packaged with a PS2 title. On the eve of an impending tour, we caught up with the band, which provided a little song and dance on its newfound status as champion of the interactive-entertainment industry. *–Scott Steinberg*

Why include a special edition of *Amplitude* on your album?
We just wanted to give back whatever we could to the fans. The idea had been kicked around amongst us for a while, and management finally bought into it. Our label was willing to make it happen, so we ran with it. Hopefully, gamers will be pleased we pulled this one off.

We don't think you have to worry.
That's good to hear. We figured we'd take a chance. The game was already a reality since we'd been a part of *Amplitude* when it first dropped, but creating a special version with an original track [called "Space"] took some effort.

We take it you're big PS2 fans?
Certainly, although we don't play with the machine too often on off days. It's a side effect of going on tour. When you're on the road, you clock so much time on the system that you don't want to see it again for another six months.

Which titles do you guys kill the most time on?
Surfing games, undoubtedly; we've played like all of them. *Transworld Surf*, *Sunny Garcia*...too many to mention. *Madden NFL* is great, too, and we really dig *NBA Live* as well. Good luck pulling Sonny and Truby off [the games]—*Tomb Raider* or *Splinter Cell*, too. It can't be done.

Nice move on the whole first PS2 bonus-disc thing. Think we'll see other artists like Celine Dion pull the same trick in the near future?
For her sake, let's hope not. We're pioneers, but we know we won't be the only ones to package our music with games. It won't be surprising to see others doing it as a regular thing in 2004.

Then why go to all the trouble of doing so in the first place?
Like music, games are a cutting-edge medium. We're forward thinkers. Musicians have to stay a step ahead of the game, and that goes double considering how hard the industry is hurting. It's a way to get your name out there and have fun doing so.

Planning on seeing increased album sales as a payoff?
In some way, maybe, but that's not why we did it. It's all about paying your dues...something most of today's pop stars just don't get.

How does designing a track for a game differ from penning one for a record?
You get the idea from the theme of the game, just as you'd do if [you were] scoring a movie. Often, like with the track we contributed to *The Matrix Reloaded*, you don't even get to see the product ahead of time. So you just have to get a picture in your head of what the game's about and go from there.

Out of all the musicians you've met, who are the biggest PlayStation addicts?
Incubus. We used to battle those guys all the time...it was constant trash talk. Most of the time, we'd gamble on the outcome of the games. P.O.D. typically walked away richer for it, but anything can happen during a multiplayer match—it just depends on the day your thumbs are having.

Practice also makes perfect....
Of course. While touring, we'll spend 12 to 13 hours a week in front of the console. Everyone on the bus has a PS2 in their bunk.

Hit us with your best idea for a game concept.
Our game would be a combination of *Tekken*-type street fighting and *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*–style action sports. Skaters and surfers would be rockin' guns. Sounds dope, doesn't it?

Uh, sure. You're the PlayStation gurus....
No doubt. You should have seen us at Ozzfest. Every night before Ozzy went on, the bands would grab a controller and battle it out on the JumboTron. P.O.D. was undefeated for 15 days straight. We got game.

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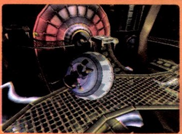
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Did you know?
The SAS motto is "Who Dares, Wins". If you played MGS2 you would know, slacker!

21st Century Entertainment Experience
Consolidation of These Business Segments will Accelerate the Development of Next Generation Devices and Entertainment

Transform and Get Out! Sony will cut 20,000 jobs from its work force over three years as part of its "Transformation 60" plan. The plan is designed to reduce costs and merge Sony's movie, electronics, and videogame businesses.

ONLY IN JAPAN

DREAM MIX TV WORLD FIGHTERS

If you think only American companies can shamelessly rip off one another—you're wrong. And Hudson is determined to prove it. Enter its newest game, *Dream Mix TV World Fighters*. Remember the *Super Smash Bros.* series on Nintendo consoles? It's like that, except it takes advantage of Hudson's close relationship with Konami and Takara to chuck their characters into the (dream) mix, which is a good thing, given how bare Hudson's character lineup is. Momotaro (of the long-running railroad board game, now in its 12th incarnation) may be a Japanese household name, but beyond Bomberman, the rest of Hudson's characters, like Master Higgins of the execrable *Adventure Island* series, are marked more by the vague "oh yeah, I remember him!" factor. Konami brought the big hitters in with a character from its ultrapopular superdeformed baseball games and a random Belmont from *Castlevania*, forcing Takara to dig deep for its lineup. Since there isn't much at Takara to begin with, it cheated a bit by exploiting its toy line to unleash Optimus Prime (cue "ooh!") and a Japanese Barbie to battle such freaks as the kid from *Beyblade*. Naturally, all that madness can't be wrapped in a traditional fighting game, so to enable four-player battles and NOT totally rip off *Smash Bros.*, Hudson came up with the charasoul system. You have to literally beat the charasouls out of your opponents and collect them. It's an interesting system, and it makes for a chaotic game as players scramble to pick up power-ups and charasouls and beat the living bejesus out of everyone else. The only problem is that Hudson forgot to rip off the "fun" from *Smash Bros.*, so the chaos is less frantic and more annoying. *Dream Mix* will not be making it over to the United States, so if you're looking to beat the Beyblades out of that kid (they're just spinning tops! Get over it!)...sorry.

Dream (Secret) Cast

Like *Smash Bros.*, *Dream Mix* also has a roster of hidden characters. Here's who we'd like to see:

- Contra Dude (*Contra*): I'd pick the Arnie clone over the Sly clone and then unleash a seemingly unending stream of bullets. Then I'd grab the flamethrower. Oh snap.
- Kato-chan (*Kato-chan & Ken-chan*): This Japanese pseudocelebrity has his own PC Engine game, which features a lot of flatulence and death by turd.
- Vic Viper (*Gradius*): This makes absolutely no sense from any point of view, and thus is absolutely perfect. Remember the *Daytona* car in *Fighter's Megamix*? Exactly.
- Solid Snake (*MGS*): Grab neck. Snap neck. Repeat until stage is won. Smoke cigarette.

Frag Grenade : 2

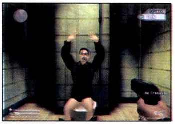
PLAYING THE GAME

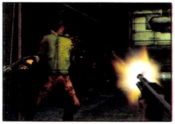
We pry open the closed doors for a behind-the-scenes look at how games get the green light

Games don't just magically appear out of thin air, nor are they simply delivered to stores by some magical game stork. In fact, there's a long and often stressful process for developers that involves countless hours slaving away on a project before a publisher has even decided to support it. Such is the case with Swordfish Studios and its upcoming first-person shooter, *Cold Winter*, but the story behind Swordfish is relatively atypical for the gaming industry.

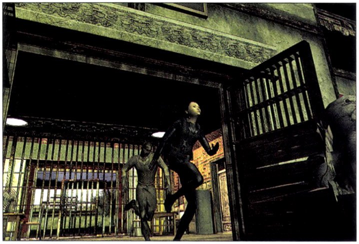
Rage Software originally commissioned a squad-based shooter based on the British SAS, but about a year after preproduction began, Rage ran into serious financial trouble that eventually led to its downfall. Members of Rage scrambled to form a new company called Swordfish Studios, and it secured the intellectual property rights for the project. Shortly thereafter, development continued and after some initial design changes, *Cold Winter* started to take shape. "[It became clear] that Swordfish's existence depended on the game," says Julian Widdows, development director at Swordfish Studios.

To fight for its survival, Swordfish had to pitch the game to a publisher—in this case, Vivendi Universal. Otherwise, the chances of *Cold Winter* ever seeing the light of day would've been slim. However, a good pitch requires more than just good ideas—it needs a demo that shows the best features of the game, which isn't exactly an easy task for an early project. "All sorts of things can go wrong [during a pitch]," Widdows added. "You just never





1,100 The number of specialty parts and components to modify your sweet ride with at the SEMA auto show.



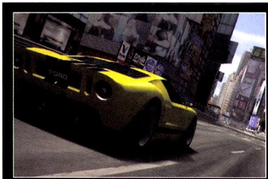
know how they're going to go, but come hell or high water, we were going to do the presentation."

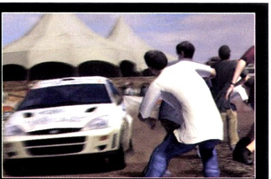
From the publisher's perspective, Swordfish didn't have to do much convincing. "We looked at them as a quality European studio," says Stephen Wickes, executive producer at Vivendi Universal. "Plus, we're an advocate of Renderware for smaller studios, and *Cold Winter* looked nothing like a typical Renderware game." Representatives from Vivendi Universal also did a little background check on Swordfish by speaking with employees at Criterion Software, the creators of the Renderware engine. "We talked to Criterion about Swordfish's ability to work," says Wickes. "And we recognized that they're a passionate team."

Swordfish's history and its ability to harness the potential of the engine were enough to gets its foot in the door at Vivendi, but the game itself would ultimately decide whether the publisher would sign on to the project. Fortunately for Swordfish, Vivendi saw *Cold Winter* as an opportunity to fill the void in its console first-person shooter library, but more importantly, it saw key similarities with other high-profile games. "We have few first-person console shooters other than *SWAT* and *Counter-Strike*," Wickes says. "It's also just a great game for our library because we like to compare our games to other games on the market [and we thought] *Cold Winter* captures elements of *Deus Ex*, *Splinter Cell*, *SOCOM*, and *Soldier of Fortune*."

After the successful pitch, Vivendi signed on and gave additional input into the project. Interestingly, the two companies immediately decided to drop the Xbox version of the game. Increasing the staff size to compensate for the Xbox version and the negative stigma of ports were two things that would potentially harm the process of establishing the brand. "We could've done two versions," says Wickes. "But it eventually came down to looking at an 18 month development cycle for an 'A' game for two platforms when we could have a 'triple-A' game for one."

As the two companies continued to give each other feedback on *Cold Winter*, Vivendi Universal had to submit the game to Sony for concept approval so that it could actually be released on PlayStation 2. Typically, Sony's response to these requests comes in the form of a three- to four-page document with plenty of feedback and questions asking about special effects, gameplay mechanics, and other features. But this time, Sony's response arrived on a single page and ended with this comment: "*Cold Winter* will be a shooter to watch in 2004." We'll have to wait and see if that's the case.





The Gran Turismo Awards

Maybe Sony should name the award the Granny

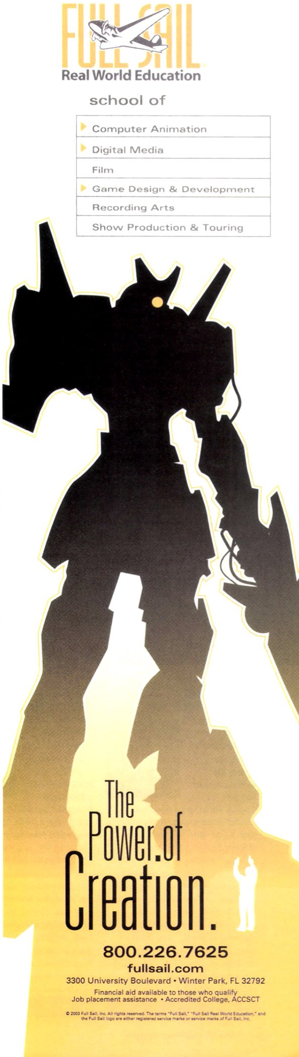
Sony Computer Entertainment of America and Polyphony Digital held the inaugural *Gran Turismo 4* Awards in Las Vegas to honor the automotive industry at the SEMA (Specialty Equipment Market Association) auto show, which focuses on automotive products. The awards honored six categories, including Best Truck or SUV, Best Japanese Import, Best European Import, Best Domestic Automobile, Best Hot Rod, and Best in Show. The Best in Show winner also received the honor of having his or her car placed in *Gran Turismo 4*.

Polyphony Digital President Kazunori Yamauchi was at the show to give out the awards. "The *Gran Turismo 4* Awards honor and exemplify the high level of passion and enthusiasm that both auto enthusiasts and the *Gran Turismo* racing franchise possess," said Yamauchi. "Through the *GT4* Awards and the support of the automotive community, *Gran Turismo 4* can not only be seen as a game, but as a unique medium to learn, enjoy, and experience automotive culture like never before."

The Best Truck or SUV award was given to the new and improved 2004 Ford F-150, while a 2001 Renault Clio Sport picked up the Best European Import award. Best Domestic Automobile went home with a 2003 Saturn Ion modified with Gude Performance parts. Finally, Best Hot Rod and Best in Show both went to a 1962 Buick Special, which will become one of the 500 cars available in *Gran Turismo 4*.

WHITE HOT

Sony Computer Entertainment Japan announced that it's releasing a special *Gran Turismo 4 Prologue* package that includes a PlayStation 2 bathed in white as well as the game. Unfortunately, like most cool videogame-related things, it's not coming to North America.



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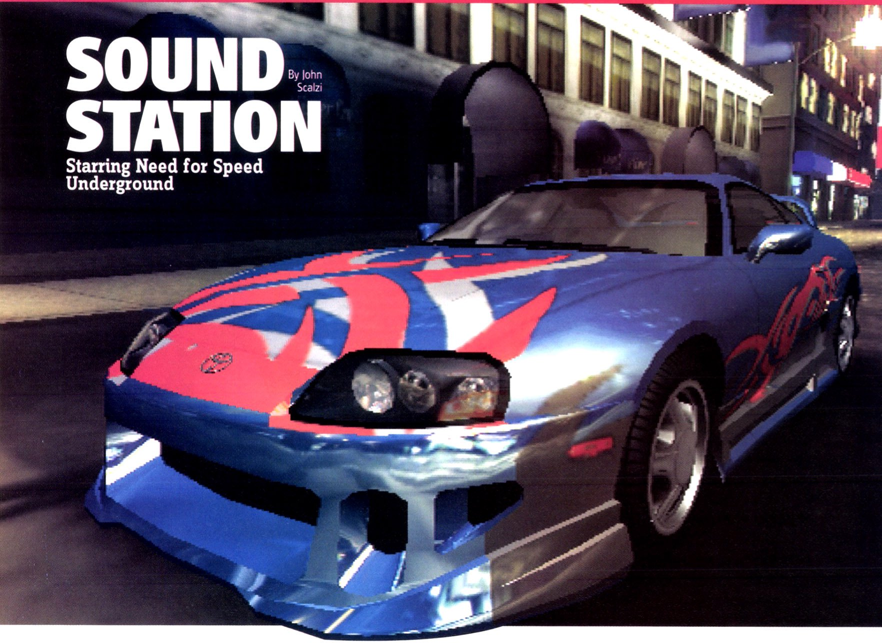
KNOW YOUR ROOTS
Rancid's Tim Armstrong and Matt Freeman were one half of the seminal ska-punk band Operation Ivy. Go buy their CD now.

SOUND STATION

By John Scalzi

Starring Need for Speed Underground



FC/KAHUNA *Machine Says Yes*

This is what it would sound like if Aphex Twin's keyboards ate Richard James and kept on playing, with the terrified background singers wondering if they're next. Aside from the soporific voice of Betty Butterfly Barbido in the rave-up "Nothing Is Wrong," this album feels largely untouched by human hands. It bleeps, it squeaks, it distorts and twists, but it doesn't seem to have a pulse. There's nothing wrong with that (I like "Nothing Is Wrong" and the icy electropulse of the title track), but honestly, you would think our new robot overlords would be more subtle about their dance music.

★★½

Fuel *Natural Selection*

"Ominous" is the word to use when your album's best track sounds like the Creedy non-sense Scott Stapp can bat out in roughly the same time it takes him to open the fridge and pour his orange juice. "Falls on Me" is a decent arena lighter-flicker, and the rest of the album is standard-issue loud, polished grindiness that, to forestall the inevitable whines, *doesn't* sound like Creed, but doesn't sound especially distinctive, either. I will admit to fondness for "Won't Back Down (Bring You Hell Remix)"—it has just enough spite. But two tracks out of 12 do not a purchase make.

★★★

Overseer *Wreckage*

Another "machines try to eat the humans" kind of album, but this time the humans fight back and, at the very least, wrench a truce out of those silicon and metal bastards. "Stompbox" is a stompin' bunch of noise that makes me want to run around the house and scare the hell out of the pets (hold on—OK, I'm back), while "Meteorology" sounds like Björk made a car ad. Aside from the waaaaay too obvious bass-and-drum rap of "Basstrap," this is pretty creative stuff, especially the freaky-hypnotic album closer "Heligoland," which features 20 (!) minutes of a phone ringing.

★★★½

Rancid *Indestructible*

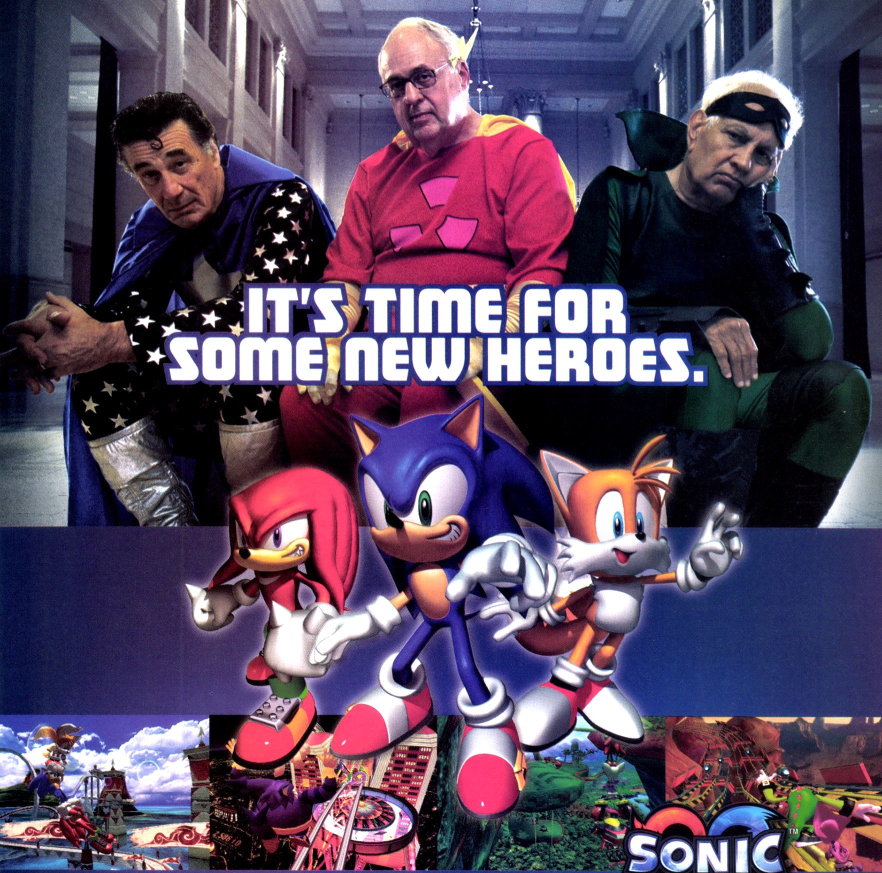
This is a fairly average outing for Rancid—which means it basically kicks righteous ass compared with just about everything else out there. And now that Joe Strummer's dead, there's no one better to fly the Clash-flavored, flat-out punk flag. Rancid's got it all, kid—the speed, the fury, and the song sense to give you some flavorful ear candy, from the opening blast of the title track to the surprisingly introspective "Tropical London." If you can find a better punk album this year, by all means, get it. But get this one, too, because there's the real possibility—nay, probability—that you're dead wrong.

★★★★

Story of the Year *Page Avenue*

I was irritated by this band simply by reading its song titles: "And the Hero Will Drown," "Anthem of Our Dying Day," and, inevitably, "Razorblades." It doesn't get much better in the lyrics: "The stars will cry the blackest tears tonight!" Settle down, Francis. You just need a hug and maybe some mood-regulating pharmaceuticals. Fortunately, SOTY is pretty tight musically in a "slightly heavier than Third Eye Blind" sort of way, so as much as I wanted to hate this band on principle, I've got to admit, they've got some chops. Now, if they can develop a friggin' sense of humor, they might go somewhere.

★★★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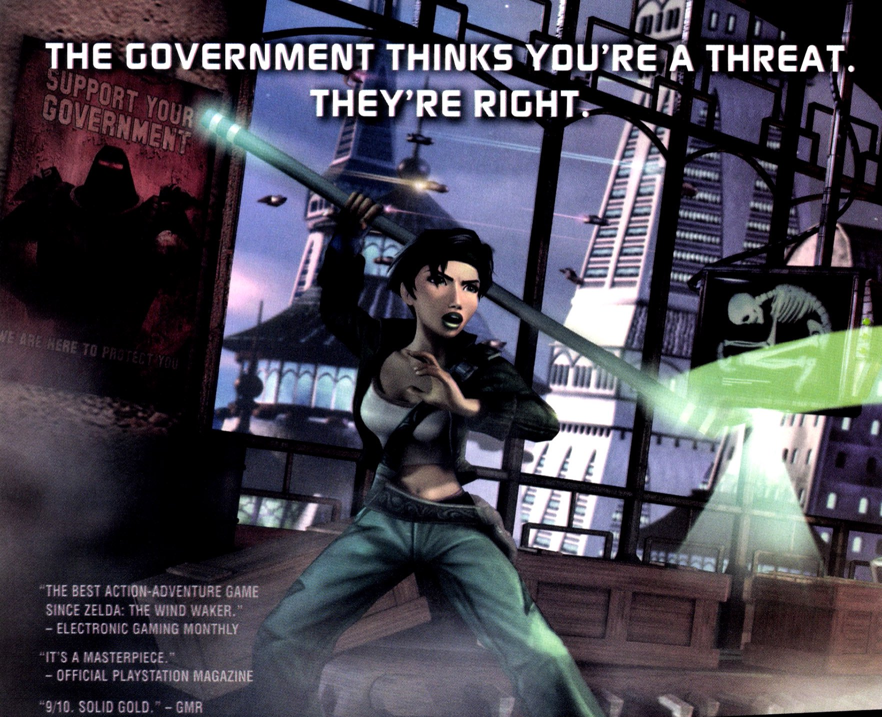
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– ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

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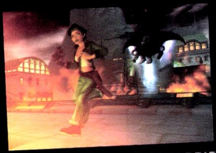

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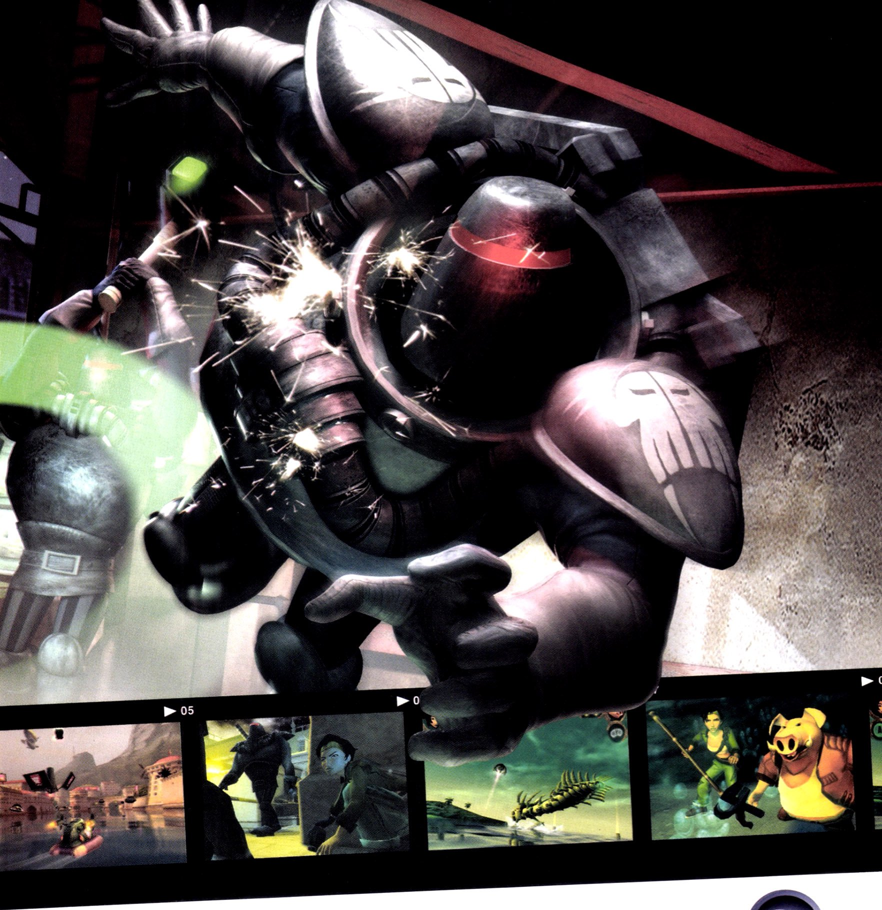

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ERRR...OK?
Johnny Depp appeared in *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare*, but was credited as "Oprah Noodlemantra."

DVD REVIEWS

By John Scalzi

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL

(Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom)

What a sad place this universe would be if Johnny Depp were not in it. Back in the early days of his *21 Jump Street*–fueled stardom, no one expected him to do anything but be pretty and pouty in that lacquered man-boy way of his. But then Depp started making bizarre and potentially suicidal career moves—and it worked. Now he's Hollywood's go-to guy for acceptable weirdness.

Pirates is a case in point. Without Depp's unhinged performance as Captain Jack Sparrow, the world's first metrosexual, this film would likely have sunk as far and as fast as *The Country Bears* (another film, like this one, based on a ride at Disneyland). But Depp keeps things light and dizzy even when the film dips into fun but undeniably questionable plot waters with pirate zombies, cursed treasure, and a cute but pointless romance between juvenile leads Orlando Bloom (speaking of metrosexual) and Keira Knightley.

You may think I make too much of Depp, but watch this film and ask yourself: Who else could pull it off? Every other actor in the film could easily be replaced by someone else—even the fabulous Geoffrey Rush as Sparrow's nemesis, Barbossa. But take away Depp and you've got nothing. The DVD extras are pretty extensive, with three sets of commentaries (including one with Depp and director Gore Verbinski), 19 deleted or alternate scenes, a truckload of making-of features, a producer's diary, some *Wonderful World of Disney* crap shoveled onto the pile, and DVD-ROM goodies. Arrr!

★★★★

Walt Disney
DEPP
RUSH
BLOOM
KNIGHTLEY
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL

UPCOMING DVD RELEASES

December 2, 2003
Alias: Season 2
Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl
Ship of Fools
Star Trek DS9: Season 7
Young Sherlock Holmes

December 9, 2003
Assassination Tango
Bad Boys II
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Season 5
Firefly: The Complete Series
Gigli

December 16, 2003
Freaky Friday
The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen
On Golden Pond
Seabiscuit
South Park: Season 3

December 23, 2003
Black Dragon
Blood
The Medallion

December 30, 2003
Beyond Re-Animator
The Order
S.W.A.T.
Sex and the City: Season 5

BAD BOYS II

(Will Smith, Martin Lawrence)

The original, incredibly awful *Bad Boys* did one good thing: It launched the film career of Will Smith, who until then had played only bit parts in his post–*Fresh Prince* outings. It also did one bad thing: It launched the film career of Martin Lawrence. And it did one unforgivable thing: It launched the film career of director Michael Bay, who is possibly the most cinematically incompetent yet commercially successful director in film history. As a sequel, *BB2* doesn't have the saving grace of launching Will Smith. All it has going for it is being a loud, violent, stupid, unfunny, pointless waste of cars and time. It's for boys without brains. DVD extras include deleted scenes, production and special effects featurettes, storyboards, and a Jay-Z video.

★

FATHER AND SON

Rod Perry, who played David "Deke" Kay in the *S.W.A.T.* TV series, played the father of Deke (L.L. Cool J) in *S.W.A.T.*, the film.

REMEMBER WHEN?

Waaay back in 2000, Jackie Chan starred in *Jackie Chan Stuntmaster*, a wholly mediocre roaming brawler for PS1.

GIGLI

(Ben Affleck, Jennifer Lopez)

To be clear, *Gigli* is not good. But let's be fair here: It's not the worst movie ever made. At the very least, it's better than *Swept Away*, which, you'll recall, was last year's Designated Film to Hate. And years from now, after the beloved President Affleck ends his second term and the memory of J-Lo's tragic fall from that ill-fated blimp on the way to a Super Bowl half-time performance has softened people's hearts, people will return to *Gigli* and wonder why everyone hated it so damn much. So it doesn't work. Is that *so* wrong? At least you have both Christopher Walken and Al Pacino in full nutjob cameo mode. At the bare minimum, grant it this much: It's not the worst movie of 2003. See *Bad Boys II* for that. The disc includes absolutely no DVD extras—because it was a big fat flop, you see.

★★

S.W.A.T.

(Samuel L. Jackson, Colin Farrell)

Is it just me, or are Jackson and Farrell in, like, 86 percent of all motion pictures made these days? What's up with that? Have actors suddenly become thin on the ground out there in California? I'm just asking is all. Given the near ubiquity of the two, it was inevitable they'd show up in the same film, and here they are, reliving a cheese-ass '70s cop show. Perhaps surprisingly, it's pretty good—it's fairly realistic as action films go (i.e., physicists won't throw up their hands in horror), and it's got a story and decent acting, what with Jackson and Farrell and Michelle Rodriguez and LL Cool J thrown in for fun. Enjoyable. Note to Jackson and Farrell, however: Quit hogging the multiplex. The DVD has commentaries from the director and screenwriter, deleted scenes, a gag reel, and making-of featurettes.

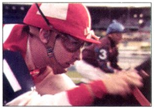
★★★½

THE MEDALLION

(Jackie Chan, Claire Forlani)

Jackie Chan movies (the Hollywood ones, anyway) tend to be fairly stupid, but Jackie Chan himself is so personable, so good-natured, so willing to make the effort to entertain you that it's really difficult to hold the stupidity of the films he's in against him. Thus, you get something like *The Medallion*, which is, unsurprisingly, pretty dim (the plot involves a kid and a medallion and bad guys and, um, stuff) but chugs along so enthusiastically under its own dopey power that it's hard to actually dislike it. I can't. I don't. This is not the same thing as saying it's a good film, though. If you're a Jackie Chan fan and you aren't particularly picky, you'll have some good clean fun with it. But just once, I'd like to see him in a Hollywood film that I don't have to qualify in some way. It's a hope.

★★½



SEABISCUIT

(Naomi Watts, Patrick Dempsey)

Gimpy horse meets gimpy jockey and gimpy trainer—and together they fight crime! Or win the Triple Crown. I'm kind of hazy on which. The movie makes the argument that the underdog nature of Seabiscuit gave people hope in the Depression, and maybe it did. But it's more interesting to see how working with the horse gives meaning to the lives of the humans around him—Jeff Bridges as his owner, Chris Cooper as his trainer, and Tobey Maguire as his jockey. Ultimately, it's a story about how believing in something can redeem and transform you, and that's a good story to tell. Plus: great horse races! Bonus features include commentary by director Gary Ross and Steven Soderbergh, making-of features, some photos by Jeff Bridges, and a feature on the real Seabiscuit.

★★★★

FIREFLY: THE COMPLETE SERIES

(Adam Baldwin, Alan Tudyk)

Earlier this year, I was at a science-fiction convention, and I met people who were *incoherent with rage* that *Firefly*, which is best described as a science fiction/western/freaky thing of a TV show, had been cancelled by Fox. But let's admit that the market for science fiction/western/freaky shows is sorta niche, even if the show in question is made by the guy who created *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (which, let's not forget, would have been cancelled in season one, had it been on a network that actually expected people to watch its shows). Will you like *Firefly*, the entire run of which is in this package? If you're the sort of person who likes science fiction/western/freaky stuff, you bet. DVD extras include unaired episodes, plus other goodies.

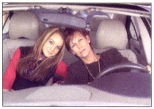
★★★½

THE ORDER

(Heath Ledger, Shannyn Sossamon)

Heath Ledger is a priest—Ah ha ha ha hah! Whoops, wait, let me pull it together, here. OK, here we go: Ah ha ha ha HAH! Damn! Sorry about that. Give me a second to collect my thoughts. OK, let's begin again: A priest, played by Heath Ledger—HA! Ah hah ha hah hah hah! I'm so sorry. I think I'm having a seizure. Apparently, when the combination of the words "Heath Ledger" and "is a priest"—HOOO hooo hooo hah HAH! See? I have no control over this! But who wouldn't laugh at the thought of Heath Ledger as a priest?—HA ha HA ha HA HA HA! Oh, wait, I know! The studio executives who had to market Heath Ledger as a priest to teenage girls! Ha! Now, THAT'S funny! The DVD offers deleted scenes and director commentary, but you'll be lucky to get that far.

★½



FREAKY FRIDAY

(Jamie Lee Curtis, Lindsay Lohan)

Mom and daughter trade bodies, and now I want you to go wash out your brain, you sick little monkey. Really. Jamie Lee Curtis got rave reviews for her performance in this silly little movie (a remake of the 1976 film of the same name, which starred Jodie Foster, of all people), and it's easy to see why: When she plays a teenager trapped in her mom's body, she looks like she's having so much fun that it's hard not to get caught up with her. (Poor Lindsay Lohan, as the teenager, has to pretend to be the mom—so she's the straight man of the pair.) This is the sort of DVD you buy for your little sister but end up watching by yourself when you think no one's around. The DVD extras are pretty robust: deleted scenes, bloopers, an alternate ending, a couple of music videos, and a feature on Lohan.

★★★½

THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN

(Sean Connery, Peta Wilson)

Sean Connery is still kicking ass at age 72, and that's excellent news for him (a man his age needs all the cardio exercise he can get). Unfortunately and ironically, it's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* that's incoherent, senile, and doddering. Connery (as adventurer Allan Quartermain) leads a bunch of 19th-century public domain heroes in a quest to save the world—or at least a stuffy Victorian version of it. You'll find it hard to care. If you're thinking about picking this up, what you really should do with your money is spend it on the Alan Moore graphic novel on which the film is based. It's much better. The DVD comes with commentary, making-of features, and a dozen deleted scenes.

★★

CONTROL.
EITHER YOU GOT IT
OR YOU DON'T.

PlayStation®2

EVERYONE

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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ONLINE
BROADBAND AND DIAL-UP

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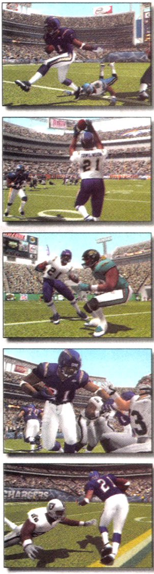
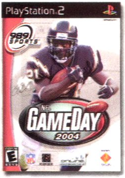
NFL GAMEDAY 2004





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NEWTYPE USA
Want more anime info? Check out *Newtype* magazine. (Keep an eye out for a soon-to-be-former *OPM* Managing Editor!)

ANIMANIA!

By Dave Smith

Ham it up with a Miyazaki classic

Hot Crimson Pig Action

Word from its one-shot theatrical debut is that *Porco Rosso* will be available Stateside on DVD next April, courtesy of Walt Disney Home Entertainment. Mark your calendars, because this will be the must-have disc of 2004. Hayao Miyazaki's action-packed idyll, set over the Adriatic Sea in an alternate vision of the 1930s, is perhaps his most entertaining film, a brilliant mix of comedy and imaginations of what Europe between the wars might have become.

In other Miyazaki news, the dub of his magnum opus *Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind* is underway, starring Patrick Stewart and Uma Thurman. Disney also has plans to release the quiet romance *Whisper of the Heart* in the near future, but its status is still up in the air.

Buy No Other Series With "Teacher" in the Title

For more fun on the punk-out-of-water tip, Tokyopop is re-releasing *Great Teacher Onizuka* in two budget-priced box sets. Volume 1 just came out, delivering 500 minutes of teaching, thuggery, and schoolgirl lust for a comparatively modest $99.99. Onizuka's relentless lechery may get old after awhile, but when he saves the suicidal teenager by crushing the evil principal's new Toyota, again, you know that was $99.99 well spent.

Waking Up From the Gun Dream

If you missed the original release of Yukito Kishiro's superb sci-fi comic *Battle Angel Alita*, Viz has announced it will re-release the series in its new digest format, starting in December. The new versions will be cheaper than the pricey originals (good news), and they'll also have a few extra features (better news), including background material, gag strips, and an afterword by Kishiro. New volumes will arrive every couple of months, alongside the still-running sequel series *Last Order*.

Occupation: Space Pirate

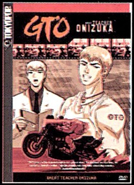
Now that you've bought *Arcadia of My Youth* and become a fervent disciple of famed space pirate Captain Harlock (or at least bought it, at any rate), Geneon is offering more Harlockian goodness with the somewhat oddly named new *Captain Herlock, Space Pirate* series, the first volume of which is due at the end of January. The animation may be modern and the title may be inexplicable, but the action is pure Harlock goodness.

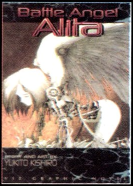
DESTROY!

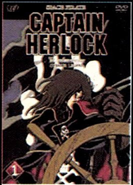
Media Blasters has a hit coming straight out of left field in the form of *Sadamitsu the Destroyer*, due out in mid-December. The story of a street-gang leader possessed by a superpowered battle suit and driven to destroy hordes of invading aliens with the aid of his loyal crew of thugs is an easy lock for Manliest Cartoon of the Year. When Sadamitsu's Myrmidons swear to die fighting or else, you know you're watching quality.

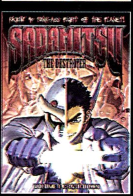
11 on 13

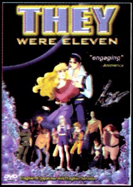
An update on a critical tidbit from last month: Central Park Media's *They Were 11* DVD release is now pegged at Jan. 13. If you buy anything else that day, you'll regret it—Moto Hagio's blend of drama, gender issues, hard sci-fi, and John Woo-styled food fights constitutes an unjustly forgotten gem.

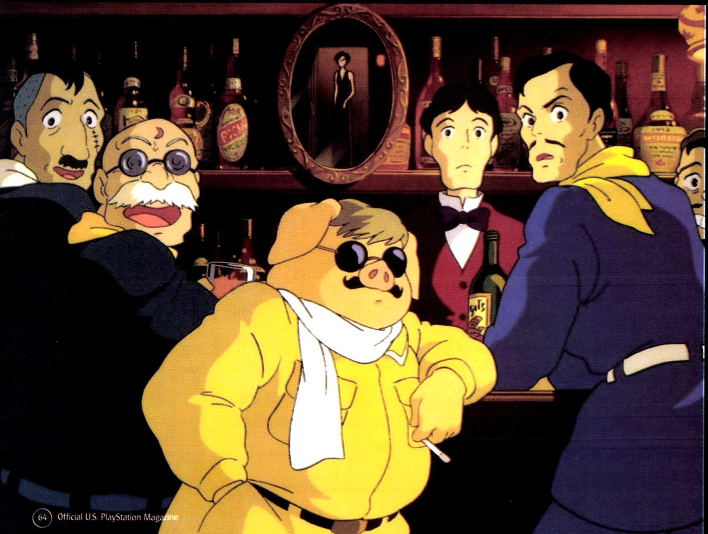












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CHRIS CARLE - EDITOR IN CHIEF IGN GUIDES/IGN CODES - IGN.COM

"I'm a huge fan of Rampart. It's one of my favorite old arcade games."
JOE FIELDER - PREVIEWS EDITOR - ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

"Combining established classics like Joust, Spy Hunter and Defender with gems like Toobin' and Blaster, this is a must-have collection of classic arcade games."
Eric Bratcher - Associate Editor
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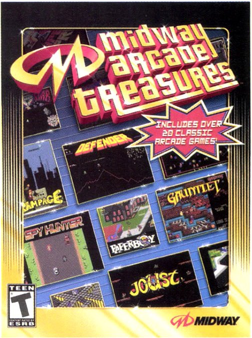

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- Bubbles
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- Blaster
- Rampart
- Sinistar
- Super Sprint
- 720°
- Toobin'
- KLAX
- SPLAT!
- Satan's Hollow
- Vindicators
- Root Beer Tapper

midwayarcadetreasures.midway.com

MIDWAY

TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Violence

PlayStation 2

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

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THE LIST

The 9 coolest things we could find this month

RETRO TOY

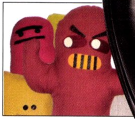
NAMCO 5-IN-1

Time warp back to the '80s and play *Pac-Man*, *Bosconian*, *Dig Dug*, *Rally X*, and *Galaxian* by simply plugging this retro joystick into your television. It's an ideal holiday gift for anyone over the age of 30. We'd buy it for *Pac-Man* alone.

QUIRKY STUFFED ART

SHAWNIMALS

Go to www.shawnimals.com and find out why we're so hooked on creator Shawn Smith's quirky stuffed toy creations. Every creature is unique, and each has its own bizarre little backstory. It's stuffed art, and seriously cool.

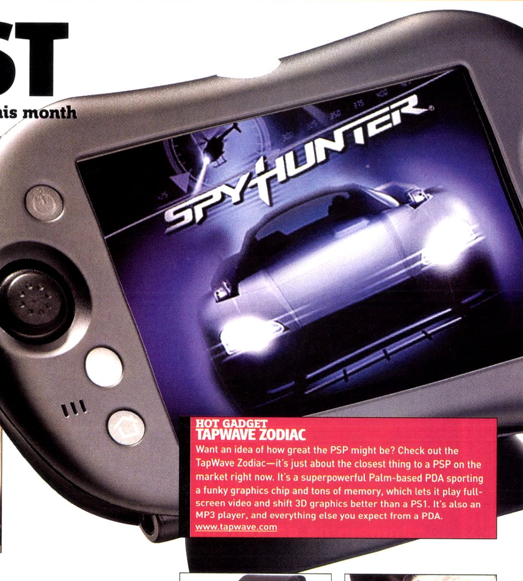


RARE JAMS

PEARL JAM LOST DOGS: RARITIES AND B-SIDES

All of you who think you like "alternative" music should check out this collection of 31 songs from guys who were there near the beginning. Hardcore fans of PJ will be thrilled to hear previously unreleased gems, including "Last Kiss" and "Yellow Ledbetter."

PEARL JAM
LOST DOGS



HOT GADGET

TAPWAVE ZODIAC

Want an idea of how great the PSP might be? Check out the TapWave Zodiac—it's just about the closest thing to a PSP on the market right now. It's a superpowerful Palm-based PDA sporting a funky graphics chip and tons of memory, which lets it play full-screen video and shift 3D graphics better than a PS1. It's also an MP3 player, and everything else you expect from a PDA. www.tapwave.com

ADULT SUPERHERO

SLEEPER

Think *Donnie Brasco* with superpowers. Written less like a superhero book and more like an HBO crime drama, *Sleeper* details the activities of undercover double agent Holden Carver after he infiltrates a superhuman-led crime syndicate. "Season one" wraps up with issue 12, but you can catch up with Holden's dark, gritty, morally complex exploits with *Sleeper: Out In The Cold*, which collects issues #1-6.

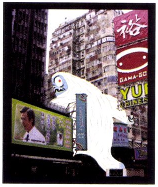
sleeper
out in the cold
Ed Brubaker Sean Phillips

MORE UNIQUE STUFF

GAMA GO

Gama who? What is it? A collection of unique T-shirts, clothing, accessories, and much, much more, that's what. Everything on the web site is limited edition, so once it's gone, it's gone, and you've bought yourself something truly unique. Our pick? We'll take a Deathbot meshback, thank you. Redneck-influenced sci-fi art has never looked so good.

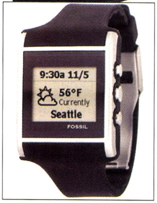
www.gama-go.com



KICK-ASS PC

SONY VAIO V100G

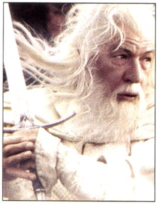
The only PCs that look as good as anything from Apple come from Sony, and the new VAIO is no exception. It's a gorgeous-looking media center contained in a classy-looking 15-inch LCD screen with built-in speakers and DVD/CD-RW combo drive. It has plenty of gaming power, and also acts as a television and digital video recorder (running Sony's Giga Pocket software, which works just like TiVo).



DICK TRACY WATCH

FOSSIL WRIST NET

Fossil continues to squeeze amazing wonders of technology into cool-looking watches with the Wrist Net, a device that runs on the pager network and allows you to receive instant messages (but not send them), as well as news, weather, and sports reports. As with the majority of Fossil's watches, it looks pretty darn cool, too. Now there's absolutely no way someone can't get in touch with you. Scary, huh?



MOVIE TO RULE THEM ALL

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

We really don't need to say much here, do we? If you're going to see a back-to-back showing, we recommend that you first see *Return* separately. Why? You don't want to wait eight hours to get to the chapter you really want to see. There'd be nothing worse than nodding off before you get to the end and never find out what happens to Master Frodo and his special friend.

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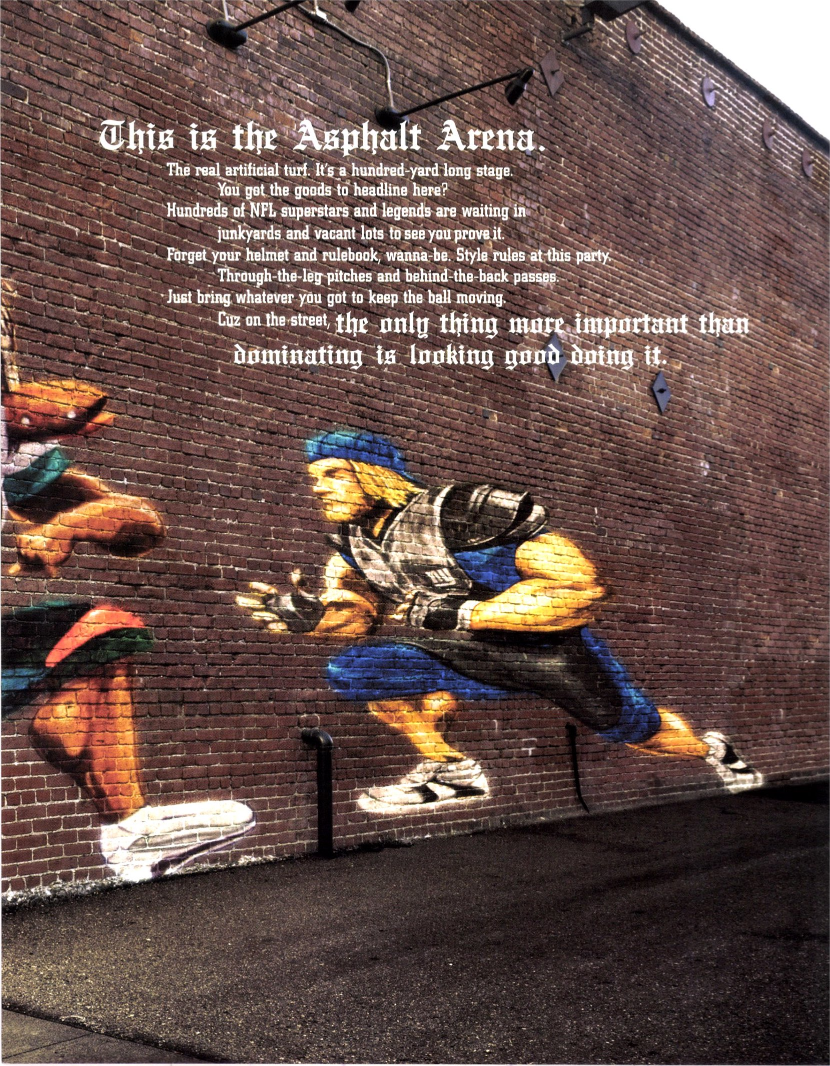
Welcome

VIKINGS



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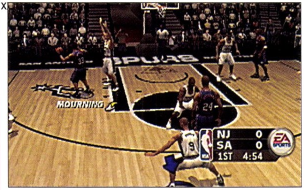
DEAD ALIVE
The name of *LOTR* director Peter Jackson's infamous, hilarious, and ultragory zombie movie.

BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EB GAMES electronics boutique

PS2 Top 20 Sales

Check out those six five-star games below! This empirically proves that 30 percent of the games sold in October are simply awesome. Keep buying great games, peeps. Keep it up! Keep the RAWK alive!



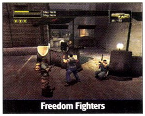
Holy schlamoly, have you seen those LeBron James Nikes? They cost a whopping $160!!! Not only that, but they're modeled after his Hummer! Who wants shoes that look like military cars?

	Title/Publisher	Rating
1	**NBA Live 2004** (EA Sports)	★★★★½
2	**WWE Smackdown! Here Comes The Pain** (THQ)	★★★½
3	**Jak II** (Sony CEA)	★★★½
4	**SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs** (Sony CEA)	★★★★★
5	**Tony Hawk's Underground** (Activision)	★★★★★
6	**Castlevania: Lament Of Innocence** (Konami)	★★★★
7	**NHL 2004** (EA Sports)	★★★★
8	**Madden NFL 2004** (EA Sports)	★★★★★
9	**ESPN NBA Basketball** (Sega)	★★★★★
10	**True Crime: Streets Of L.A.** (Activision)	★★
11	**Backyard Wrestling** (Eidos)	★★½
12	**Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004** (EA Sports)	★★★★★
13	**Conflict: Desert Storm II** (Gotham Games)	★★★
14	**Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** (Konami)	★★½
15	**Mega Man X7** (Capcom)	★★★½
16	**Freedom Fighters** (EA Games)	★★★★★
17	**Kingdom Hearts** (Square Enix U.S.A.)	★★★★½
18	**Celebrity Deathmatch** (Gotham Games)	★½
19	**The Simpsons Hit & Run** (Vivendi Universal)	★★★★
20	**NHL 2004** (EA Sports)	★★★★

Jak II

SOCOM II

Castlevania: LOI


Freedom Fighters

Source: EB Games, October 2003. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets, and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff.

PS1 Top 10 Sales

1	**FF Tactics**	Square
2	**Beyblade**	Crave
3	**Ms. Pac-Man Maze**	Namco
4	**Final Fantasy IX**	Square
5	**Final Fantasy VIII**	Square
6	**Shrek Treasure Hunt**	TDK
7	**Namco Museum Vol. 3**	Namco
8	**Final Fantasy Origins**	Square
9	**Ford Truck Mania**	Gotham
10	**InuYasha**	Bandai

Japan's Top 10 PS2 Games

1	**Naruto: N. Hero**	Bandai
2	**Way of the Samurai 2**	Spike
3	**Taiko no Tatsujin 3**	Namco
4	**Macross**	Bandai
5	**Grand Theft Auto III**	Capcom
6	**Dynasty Warriors 4XL**	Koei
7	**Far East of Eden II**	Hudson
8	**Tomb Raider: AOD**	Eidos
9	**Drakengard**	Square Enix
10	**Gundam: Enc in Space**	Bandai

Top 10 BLOCKBUSTER Rentals

1	**Tony Hawk's UG (PS2)**	Activision
2	**WWE Here Comes (PS2)**	THQ
3	**Conflict: DS (PS2)**	Gotham
4	**Simpsons Hit & Run (PS2)**	VUG
5	**Madden NFL 2004 (PS2)**	EA
6	**TMNT (PS2)**	Konami
7	**NBA Live 2004 (PS2)**	EA
8	**Jak II (PS2)**	SCEA
9	**SW: Rogue Squad (GC)**	LucasArts
10	**Backyard Wrestling (PS2)**	Eidos

SOURCE: BLOCKBUSTER, WEEK ENDING NOV. 2, 2003

Top 10 Sales, All Systems

1	**NBA Live 2004 (PS2)**	EA
2	**WWE Here Comes (PS2)**	THQ
3	**Final Fantasy XI (PC)**	Square
4	**Jak II (PS2)**	SCEA
5	**Rainbow Six 3 (XB)**	Ubisoft
6	**SOCOM II (PS2)**	SCEA
7	**Tony Hawk's UG (PS2)**	Activision
8	**Super Mario 4 (GBA)**	Nintendo
9	**Call Of Duty (PC)**	Activision
10	**Castlevania: LOI (PS2)**	Konami

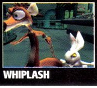
Trend Spotter: Furries

We love talking animals. Our fondest furry memory is a *Rescue Rangers* episode with the Coca-Cola cult that chanted "Come along, you belong, feel the fizz." Furries are taking over the PS2 now!

RATCHET & CLANK: GC

JAK II

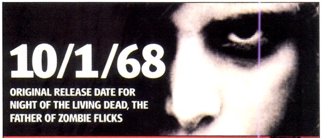
BLOODY ROAR 4

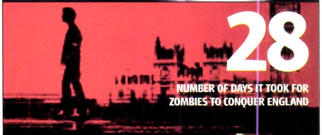

WHIPLASH

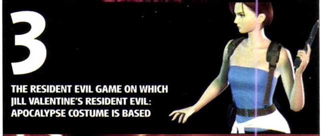
CRASH NITRO KART

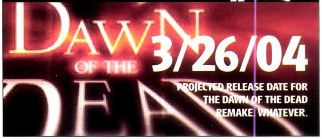
Brains!

Zombies are lurching around the PS2! Watch out!


10/1/68
ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE FOR NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, THE FATHER OF ZOMBIE FLICKS


28
NUMBER OF DAYS IT TOOK FOR ZOMBIES TO CONQUER ENGLAND


3
THE RESIDENT EVIL GAME ON WHICH JILL VALENTINE'S RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE COSTUME IS BASED



3/26/04
PROJECTED RELEASE DATE FOR THE DAWN OF THE DEAD REMAKE. WHATEVER.

SOURCE: US, HOLLYWOOD, AND THE INTERNET

● REC

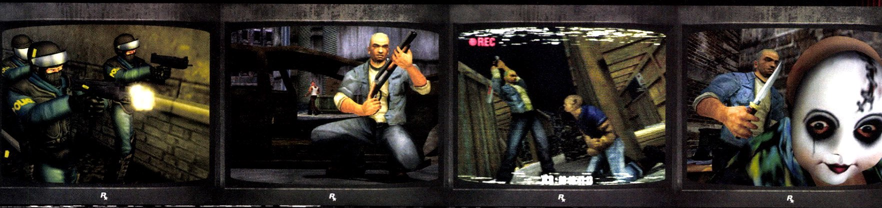
THEY JUST KILLED CASH.
NOW THEY WANT TO KILL HIM AGAIN.

AMERICA IS FULL OF RUN DOWN, BROKEN RUST-BELT TOWNS WHERE NOBODY CARES AND ANYTHING GOES.
IN CARCER CITY, NOTHING MATTERS ANYMORE AND ALL THAT'S LEFT ARE CHEAP THRILLS.
THE ULTIMATE RUSH IS THE POWER TO GRANT LIFE AND TAKE IT AWAY, FOR SPORT. THIS TIME JAMES EARL CASH, YOU ARE THE SPORT.
THEY GAVE YOU YOUR LIFE BACK. NOW, THEY ARE GOING TO HUNT YOU DOWN.

YOU AWAKE TO THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN PANICKED BREATH.
YOU MUST RUN, HIDE AND FIGHT TO SURVIVE.
IF YOU CAN STAY ALIVE LONG ENOUGH, YOU MAY FIND OUT WHO DID THIS TO YOU.

THE FINAL CUT

IN STORES NOW!



MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Strong Language
Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

PlayStation®2

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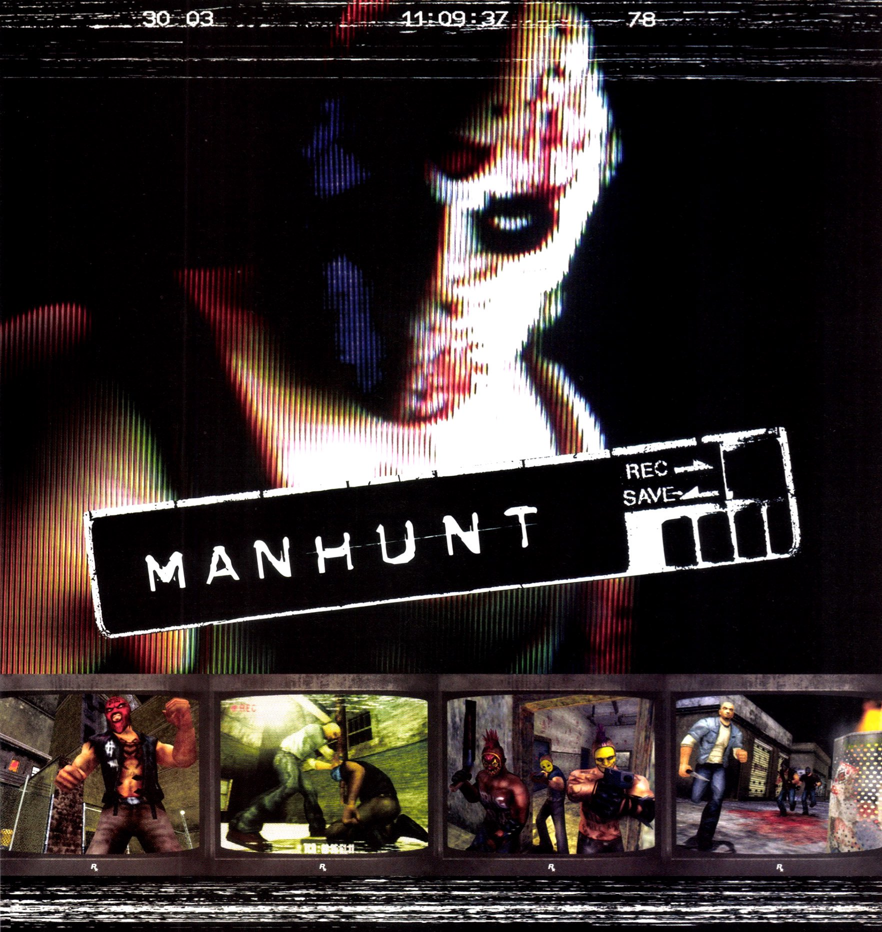

WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/MANHUNT

Note: Rockstar will be following ESA guidelines for M rated games in the marketing of this game. This game contains violent language and behavior and may not be appropriate for persons under the age of 17. The story, names and incidents portrayed herein are fictitious. No identification or similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is intended or should be inferred. Any resemblance is coincidental. The makers and publishers of this videogame do not in any way endorse, condone or encourage this kind of behavior.

I'm not a soccer star, but I play one on TV.

PlayStation 2

180
594500
SONY

PlayStation 2
EYE TOY

Includes EyeToy Play game disc + EyeToy USB camera

Soccer Craze. One of 12 EyeToy: Play games that makes you the star. EyeToy puts you on-screen and its motion-tracking technology puts you in charge, letting your body control the action. Everyone can watch. Anyone can play. And you can **be on the TV**.

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

www.us.playstation.com

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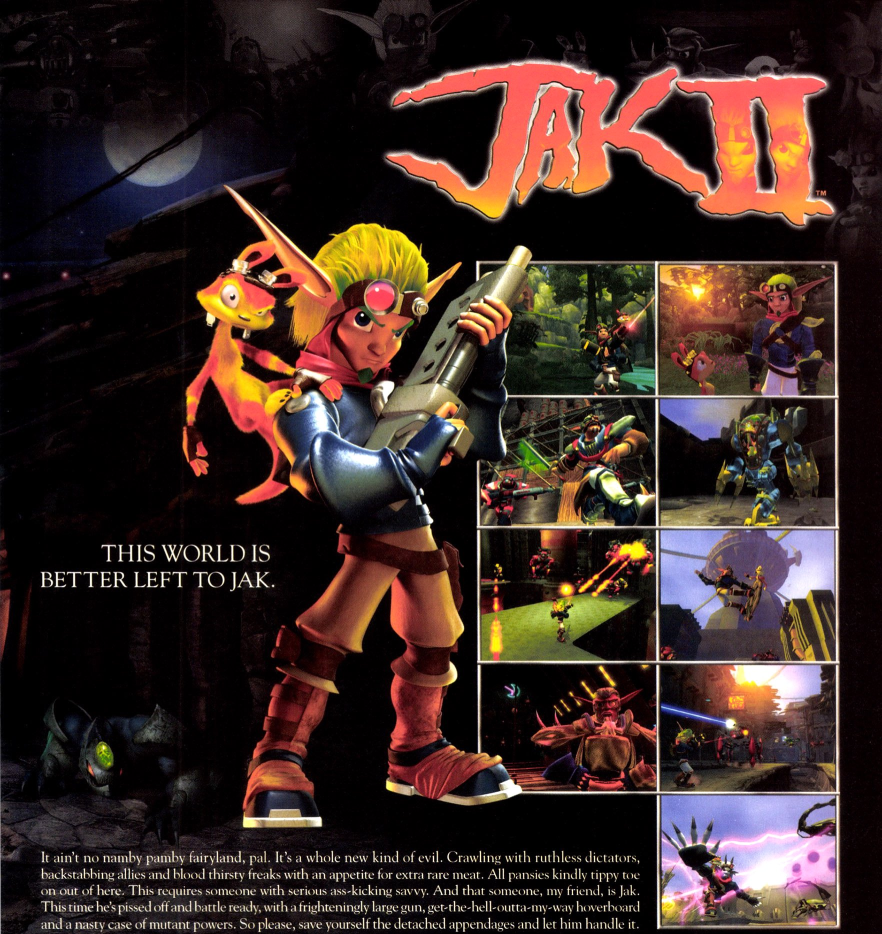


JAK II™

THIS WORLD IS
BETTER LEFT TO JAK.

It ain't no namby pamby fairyland, pal. It's a whole new kind of evil. Crawling with ruthless dictators, backstabbing allies and blood thirsty freaks with an appetite for extra rare meat. All pansies kindly tippy toe on out of here. This requires someone with serious ass-kicking savvy. And that someone, my friend, is Jak. This time he's pissed off and battle ready, with a frighteningly large gun, get-the-hell-outta-my-way hoverboard and a nasty case of mutant powers. So please, save yourself the detached appendages and let him handle it.

NAUGHTY DOG®

PlayStation.2

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.™

THE BIG GAMES OF 2004

Your ultimate guide to 2004's PlayStation 2 games

As we reach 2004, the PlayStation 2 is at its prime. Don't believe us? Just check out the next 24 pages.

A look at every single game we know about for the coming year lies ahead. To make it all a bit more digestible, we've divided everything into four master categories (Original Games, Licensed Games, Franchise Games, and Online Games), each with its own subgroups.

Granted, this feature doesn't include *everything* you'll see in 2004. In fact, this huge group of games could very well double when E3 rolls around in May. (You never know: Some may even get pushed back to 2005!)

Still, don't be surprised if you're actually *not* surprised by some of the announcements at the industry's big event. After all, our resident gossip hound Clish MacLaver is on the case with information on lots of games that are churning about in the rumor mill.

Although 2004 isn't here yet, it's already proving itself a very exciting year for PS2 owners.

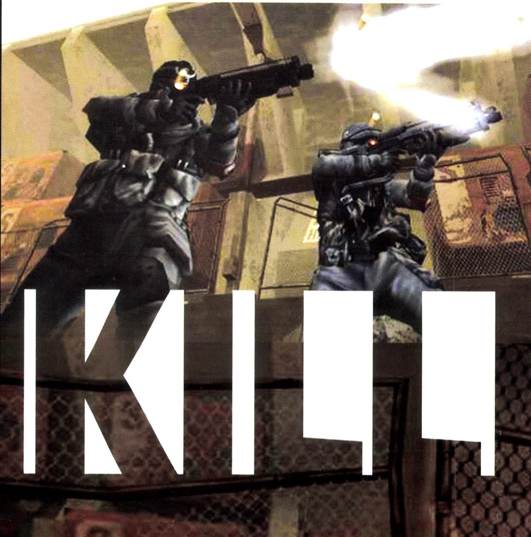
PAGE 74 **SERIES ORIGINALS** Check out the brand-new game franchises on tap for 2004.

PAGE 82 **LICENSED GAMES** Expect a slew of games based on movies, TV, comics, and more.

PAGE 90 **FRANCHISE GAMES** It quite literally seems that most upcoming games are sequels.

PAGE 104 **ONLINE GAMES** You've got that Network Adaptor by now, right?

SERIES ORIGINALS



Is the third time the charm for Dutch developer Guerrilla Games? After having two of its games canned (*Knights* and *Call of the Dragonfly*), the company sure isn't suffering from publisher apathy with its highly anticipated PS2 exclusive, *Killzone*.

With all of the hype the game is building up, you'd think it's something groundbreaking, perhaps something that could create a new genre. It's not. This game falls squarely into the existing first-person-shooter genre. However, it does stand out in several ways.

First of all, *Killzone* was designed specifically for PS2 from the ground up. So it's got the technology to allow for many of the things we missed in other PS2 FPS games—namely, good A.I., complex environments, and a smooth framerate. Oh, and the gameplay? That's shaping up nicely, too.

Inspired by conflicts such as the Vietnam War and World War II, *Killzone* focuses squarely on action in war-torn settings. This is no *Medal of Honor* retread, though. *Killzone* is gritty and aggressive—it aims to entertain, not educate.

It's set in a near future rife with forward-thinking weapons modeled after modern-day tools of combat. You control one soldier in a four-man squadron; the CPU commands your three teammates, each of whom has unique skills. They cannot be killed; however, if the enemy injures them enough, they will drop out of play in that level. You can complete *Killzone* using any of the four characters, and each soldier allows for a different gameplay experience.

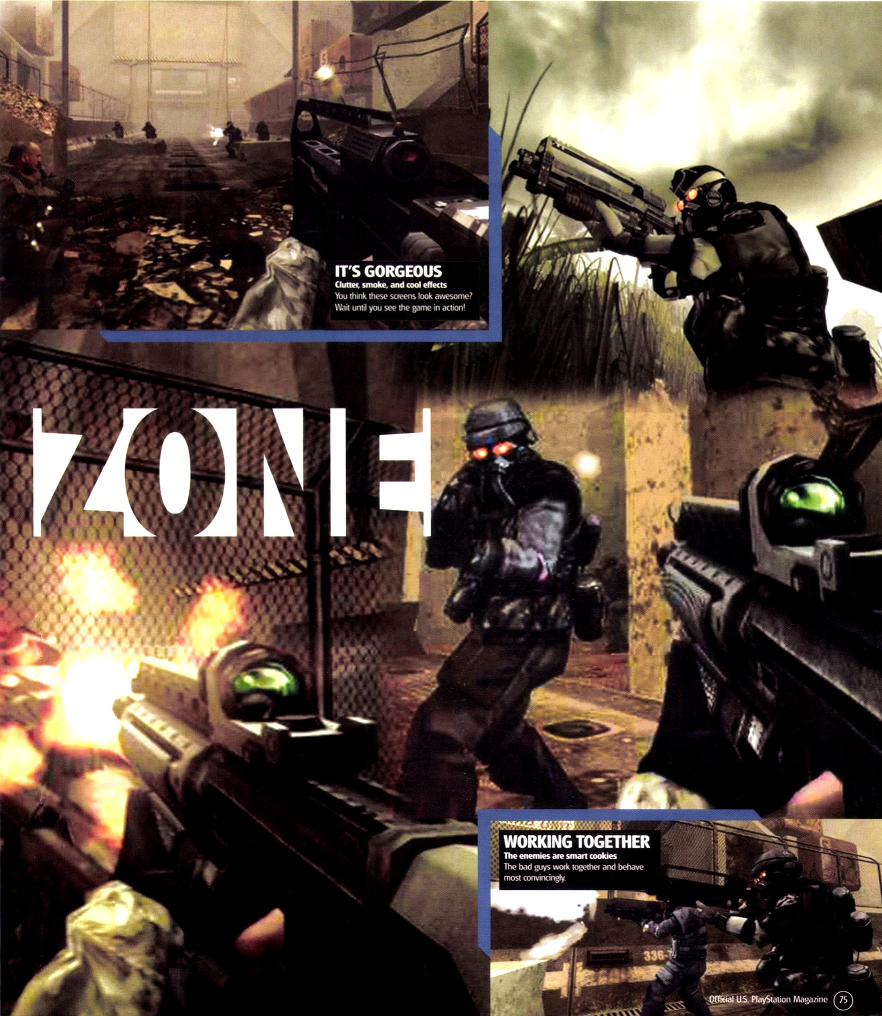
Guerrilla's extremely impressive graphics engine enables complex, well-lit environments littered with detail. The characters can move, bend, turn, and fight with the utmost precision and style, which makes it clear that the animation system takes full advantage of PlayStation 2.

This impressive art direction sets *Killzone* apart from every other FPS available today on PS2. Distinctly designed enemy soldiers, known as Helghast, feature Nazi-influenced insignias and clothing. They're required to wear masks that combat dust and dirt in the air, so their eyes glow (despite the fact that your own team's eyes look normal).

The game's washed-out visuals create a gritty, nervy atmosphere, and superb sound effects enhance the effect. Levels we've played thus far include a barren multistory shopping mall, a dense jungle, and concrete-filled urban areas.

Despite the top-notch audiovisual production values and programming, much remains to be seen on the gameplay front. As we've seen in the past, "buddy A.I." rarely works well (read: Boomer). Player expectations are also ridiculously high for this title. It'll be interesting to see if, after four years of slaving away on PlayStation 2, Guerrilla Games is about to hit pay dirt.

ZONE



IT'S GORGEOUS

Clutter, smoke, and cool effects

You think these screens look awesome? Wait until you see the game in action!

WORKING TOGETHER

The enemies are smart cookies

The bad guys work together and behave most convincingly.

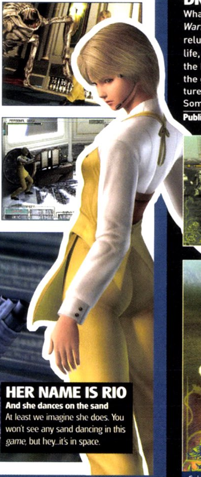
STOP THE PRESS! Just as we were going to press, Xicat informed us of its fantasy action-adventure called *Zanzarah: The Hidden Portal*, due out this fall.

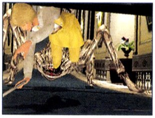
LIFELINE

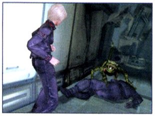
No controller necessary

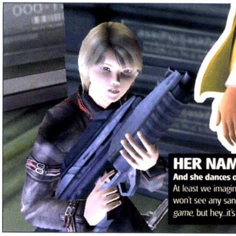
Hot on the heels of *Karaoke Revolution*, Konami takes its innovative use of the USB headset peripheral one step further in *Lifeline*. Put that DualShock down. You don't need it. Every action in *Lifeline* occurs because you say so—yes, *say* so. The game recognizes more than 10,000 phrases, which you speak in order to control the onscreen character named Rio. Actually, "control" is a bit misleading, since you quite literally *tell* her what to do. You see, Rio isn't "you"; rather, she's a survivor on a futuristic space hotel that's been overrun by alien monstrosities. You're there, too (and this time we do mean "you"), only you're lodged in the safety of a danger-free control room. Tell Rio "Check the lamp," and she'll check the lamp. Tell her "Shoot," and she'll shoot. Tell her "Take off your shirt," and she'll...well, no she won't.

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Sony CEI **Release Date:** Spring









HER NAME IS RIO

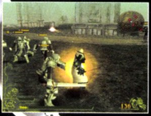
And she dances on the sand

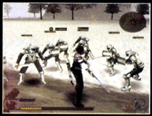
At least we imagine she does. You won't see any sand dancing in this *game*, but hey...it's in space.

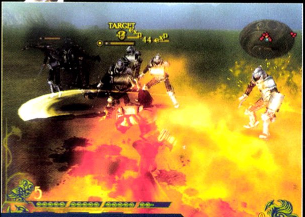
DRAKENGARD

What happens when you combine *Panzer Dragoon* with *Dynasty Warriors*? *Drakengard*, that's what. The main character, Caim, is reluctantly forced into a pact with a dragon to save not only his own life, but the dragon's as well. Together, the pair fights the forces of the Empire, which is attempting to overtake the Alliance. And while the game may not feature anyone named Vader or Leia, it does feature a healthy mix of aerial combat and beat-em-up-style action. Some missions actually combine the two.

Publisher: Square Enix **Developer:** cavia inc. **Release Date:** Spring

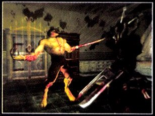






Cain uses his fire sword to set enemies *en fuego*.

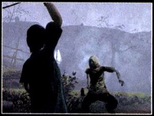
THE SUFFERING



Creepy happenings are going down in Abbott State Penitentiary. The recently convicted Torque wants nothing but to get out alive—but visions from the prison's bloody history are barring his every move. Are these hallucinations? Are they real? Through action-based gameplay in a spooky, *Silent Hill*-esque setting, you'll learn the answers...and wish you hadn't.

Pub.: Midway **Dev.:** Surreal **Date:** Feb. 13

SIREN



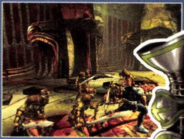
Everyone loves zombies, right? Well, you'll get your fill of 'em in *Siren*, which features the Japanese town of Hanyuda overrun with the lovable undead creatures. This new take on survival-horror features several playable characters attempting to escape from a variety of locations, such as schools, forests, and the main part of town. Just don't be too tempted to hug them.

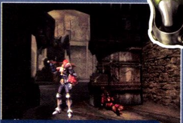
P: Sony CEA **D:** Sony CEI **Date:** Spring

PLAGUE OF DARKNESS

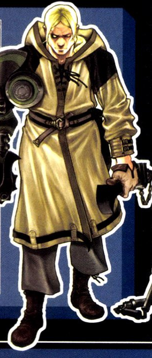
And you thought the bubonic plague of medieval England was caused by germs. Nope. Not in Namco's account of history. According to *Plague of Darkness*, the Black Death was thrust upon humanity by the denizens of the underworld. Only a valiant knight named Duran is hungry like the wolf enough to take on the forces of darkness through eight huge levels, totaling 58 areas. Yep, it's Duran's veritable reflex to use all sorts of swords, crossbows, and daggers—maybe even some magic—capable of destroying this *Onimusha*-style adventure's 25 enemy types. Find tarot cards to power yourself up further.

P: Namco **D:** Widescreen Games **Date:** June



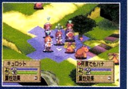


Duran has a view to a kill...many of them.



LA PUCELLE

Disgaea didn't satisfy your quirky RPG craving? *La Pucelle* comes from the same developer. Starring a teenage exorcist, the game boasts more innovations to the tactics formula than we have room to print.

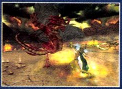


SCALER

Think of *Scaler* as a Dr. Seuss platform game that has nothing to do with Dr. Seuss. Its lush, colorful environments (possibly inspired by LSD trips) definitely pay homage to the legendary children's book author. And Scaler's kinda cute, too.

WRATH UNLEASHED

LucasArts has tapped The Collective to develop this hybrid of strategy and fighting game in the tradition of the PC classic *Archon*. Dominate the world with elementally powered centaurs, genies, fire giants, and other mythological beasts.



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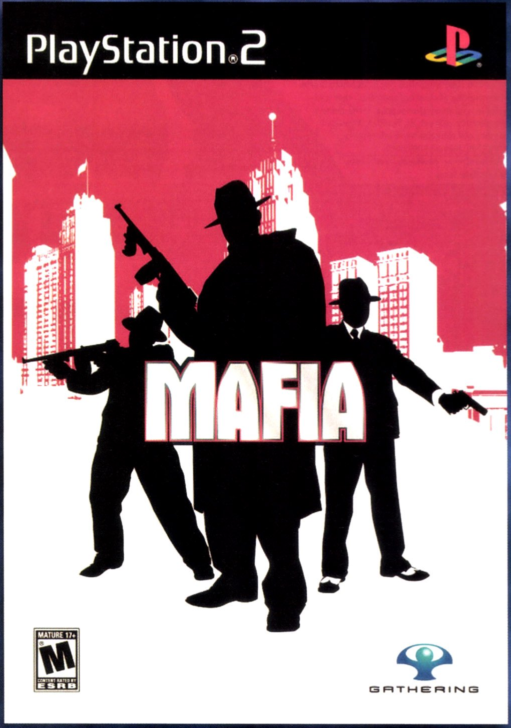
electronics boutique®

"Simply put, this is one of the finest single-player shooters ever crafted."

– IGN.COM

Mafia brings the 1930's underworld to life in this 3rd-person 3D action game. Rise from the lowly but well-dressed footsoldier to the envied and feared Made Man in an era of big bands, zoot suits and Model T's. Take on the role of a hitman, enforcer, getaway driver and more in your struggle for respect, money and power within the Salieri Family.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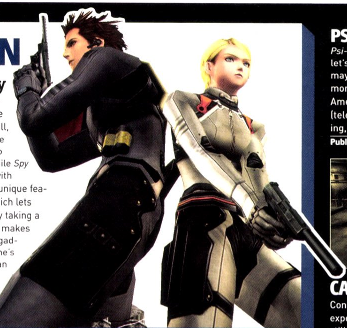
www.mindgate.com
Website of MindGate Technologies, a Tennessee-based Mac software developer. What *could* they be conspiring?!?

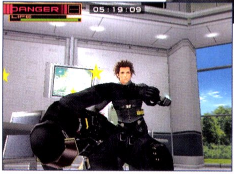
SPY FICTION

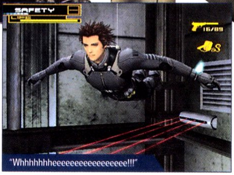
Case of mistaken identity



It's not surprising that Access Games has chosen to take on the stealth-action genre in its first-ever project, *Spy Fiction*. After all, the development team has vast experience with such games, including members who worked on the *Metal Gear Solid* series. While *Spy Fiction* shares some distinct similarities with Konami's game, it introduces a couple of unique features. We particularly like the camera, which lets you steal the identity of enemies by simply taking a quick and clear snapshot. *Spy Fiction* also makes extensive use of cloaking suits and other gadgetry to help mask the location of the game's two playable characters. Further, American gamers can expect a more interesting story than Japan's sucky one.

Publisher: Sammy **Developer:** Access Games
Release Date: Spring



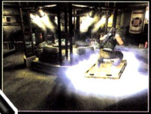


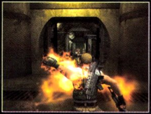
"Whhhhhhheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!"

PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy may sound like a dumb name, but let's put it in perspective—this title used to be *ESPionage*. OK, so maybe it's not much of an improvement, but silly-sounding monikers aside, the game actually shows a lot of potential. As American Psi-Operative Nick Gellar, use your mind powers (telekinesis, pyrokinesis, mind draining, aura seeing, remote viewing, and mind control) to go all Psycho Mantis on terrorists' asses.

Publisher: Midway **Developer:** Midway **Release Date:** May

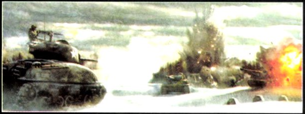




CALL OF DUTY: THEIR FINEST HOUR

Considering the awesomeness of the PC version of *Call of Duty*, we expect big things from *Their Finest Hour*. While a different game, it still has a noteworthy team running things, including some former Medal of Honor guys. Finest features three Allied campaigns (British, Russian, and American) in signature battles, including Stalingrad. You'll experience huge battles, and squadmates join you for much of the game. It's about time *Medal of Honor* got some competition.

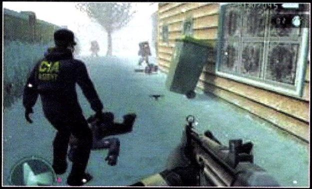
Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Spark **Release Date:** Fall



ICE NINE

What once started out as a game with close ties to the recent Al Pacino/Colin Farrell movie *The Recruit* has evolved into its own animal for BAM. The only real connection is the Ice Nine computer virus that causes all the hubbub in the flick. The game itself is a spy-thriller first-person shooter...that just so happens to have an ex–*Splinter Cell* producer on its development team. The Sam Fisher of *Ice Nine* is Tom Carter, and a sexy companion named Hannah helps him through.

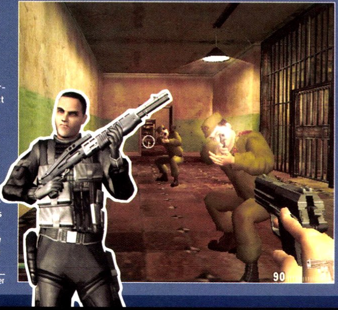
Publisher: BAM **Developer:** Torus Games **Release:** February



COLD WINTER

In a market cluttered with first-person shooters, *Cold Winter* stands out from the pack for a number of reasons. Its incredibly dynamic physics engine lets you interact with just about any object in the environment, ranging from chairs to entire beds. Additionally, the specially designed A.I. mimics actual attack and defense strategies, with enemies moving forward and backward or taking cover when the situation so warrants. Comic fans will be happy to know that acclaimed *Transmetropolitan* creator Warren Ellis penned the gritty story.

P: VUG **D:** Swordfish **Date:** Summer



FIREFIGHTER F.D. 18

At last, *Roscoe McQueen: Firefighter Extreme* has some real competition. We jest, but *Firefighter* looks like it'll be serious business, depicting realistic simulations of the behavior of out-of-control fires that mysteriously spring up in a huge city.

GUERRILLA GAME

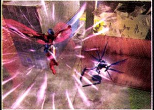
Why do we care about Guerrilla? Check out *Killzone* on page 74 and you'll see why the mere knowledge that it's developing a mysterious, untitled third-person action game for Eidos (due out this summer) excites us so.

BLACK9

An action-RPG set in the late 21st century, *Black9* thrusts you into a web of international intrigue played out on Earth and beyond. Its branching story lines involve tactics, stealth, and even nanotechnology that borders on magic.

OVERHEARD
"Like Kurosawa, I make mad films / OK, I don't make films / But if I did, they'd have a samurai." –Barenaked Ladies, "One Week"

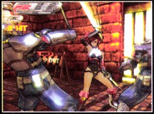
NIGHTSHADE



Formerly known as *Kunoichi*, *Nightshade* acts as a sort of successor to *Shinobi*, only with a new female ninja at the helm. Like Hotsuma, this "she-nobi"'s lightning-fast attacks and incredible agility enable her to walk on walls and almost fly through the air. Fortunately, the development team is toning down the difficulty, since most found *Shinobi* to be frustratingly hard.

Pub.: Sega **Dev.:** Sega Wow **Date:** Early '04

CRIMSON TEARS



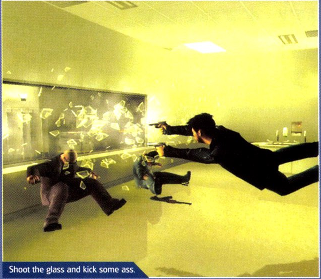
Prepare for some cel-shaded brawling in this upcoming beat-em-up. *Crimson Tears* takes place in the year 2049, a time when a massive corporation named Weponix has taken control of the world. Three characters (classified as biological weapons in the game) have the task of destroying Weponix and its manufacturing facilities by fighting in dozens of randomly generated dungeons.

P: Capcom **D:** Capcom **Release:** Summer

RISE TO HONOR

Jet Li kicks ass. This is a quantifiable fact. The fact that he's lending his moves and likeness (not to mention a little design input) to a game also kicks ass. The kick-ass-in-3D, attack-anywhere controls are a smart idea, considering Li's whirlwind fighting style, and the inclusion of Hong Kong–style firefights seems to sweeten the deal. It's interesting that at this point, the *Dead to Rights*-ish shooting segments seem more fun than the fighting; we're hoping the hand-to-hand controls get tightened up a bit. Still, it *is* Jet Li in a game.

P: Sony CEA **D:** Sony **Date:** Feb.



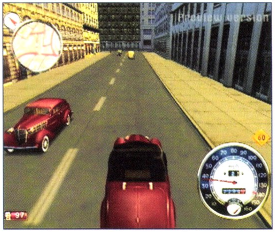
Shoot the glass and kick some ass.

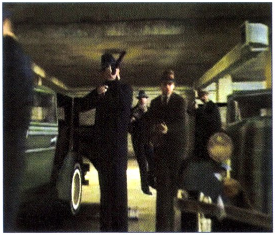
MAFIA

Organized crime time

Think *Mafia* is a *Grand Theft Auto* clone with rickety cars? Think again. Yes, *Mafia* does have a massive 1930s-style city with old-school cars in it (12 square miles). Yes, you can jack said cars and zip around in them. But that's where the similarities end. *Mafia* actually plays more like a hybrid of *GTA* and *Max Payne*. When not engaged in some tense driving missions, you (as Tommy Salieri) go running 'n' gunning in third person in a variety of missions. Escort a friend, assassinate a politician, or ransack a rival business (with your mob buddies in tow)—you can't accuse this game of lacking variety. All of this comes with a great soundtrack and possibly one of the best crime stories told in gaming. This might be the best *GTA*/*Max Payne*-inspired game of the year.

Pub: Gotham **Dev:** Illusion Softworks **Release:** Jan.

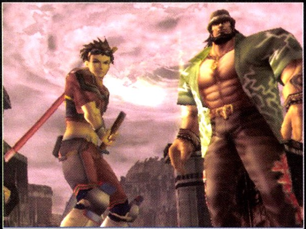




SEVEN SAMURAI 20XX

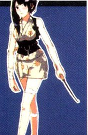
Though *Seven Samurai 20XX* is technically a licensed game based on Akira Kurosawa's classic Japanese film, we're calling it "original" because it's just so not based on the movie. Does it have samurai? Yeah. Seven of them? Doesn't look like it. You're just one samurai called Natoe (a character name not even present in the flick), plowing through monstrosities that have brought humanity to the brink of extinction. And oh yeah—it's in the freakin' future! Not exactly medieval Japan. But so what? *20XX* looks supersharp—it could even be more of a *Devil May Cry 2* than *Devil May Cry 2* is.

Publisher: Sammy **Developer:** Dimps **Release Date:** Spring



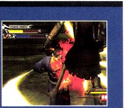
RED NINJA

The female protagonist in this stealth-action game from Vivendi Universal uses a wire as her primary weapon. This happens to be the same wire she was hung with as a child—not that she's bitter or anything.



BLOOD WILL TELL

Blood Will Tell adapts Osamu Tezuka's manga *Dororo* to videogame form. You control Hyakkimaru, a warrior questing to recover the body parts and organs stolen from him by demons when he was a little boy.



SAMURAI WARRIORS

Believe it or not, Koei probably won't release a *Dynasty Warriors* game this year—unless you count this one. Take away the Three Kingdoms setting, substitute medieval Japan, and you've got *Samurai Warriors*.

STOP THE PRESS! Yikes! Another game that almost got by us. In 2004, EA Sports will replace *KnockOut Kings* with *Fight Night 2004*.

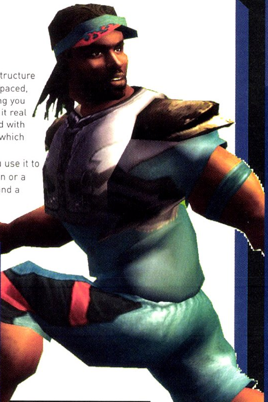
NFL STREET

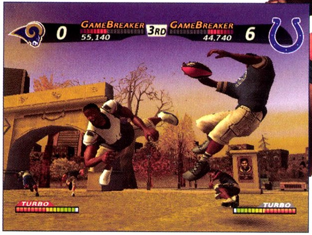
From the football field to the concrete

It's about time pro football received the EA Big treatment. Similar in structure to the publisher's similarly titled NBA game, *NFL Street* features fast-paced, 7-on-7 arcade-style action with plenty of big hits. But instead of placing you within the friendly confines of professional stadiums, the game keeps it real with contests set on city streets and even a beach. You have to contend with buildings and other environmental objects, and the actual surface on which you play affects gameplay.

The Gamebreaker ability from *NBA Street* returns, but this time you use it to make your players virtually unstoppable when running for a touchdown or a tackle. EA currently plans to integrate a full online mode so that you and a friend can go head-to-head. But more important, you can take items unlocked in the single-player game into the online arena.

Publisher: EA Sports Big **Developer:** Tiburon **Release Date:** January



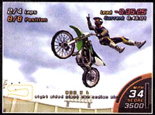


RICKY ROCKS

And he plays defense, too

Keeping in mind that your players take on both offense and defense adds strategy to *NFL Street*.

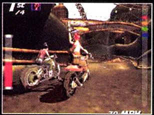
MTX: MOTOTRAX



For the newest entry in its O2 line of action-sports titles, Activision has tapped trickmaster Travis Pastrana as its cover boy. And why not? This kid can't even drink yet, and he's already been named ESPN's Motocross Rider of the Year. Should be fun.

P: Activision **D:** Left Field **Date:** March

JACKED



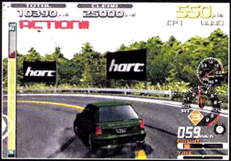
When 3DO folded last summer, Austrian publisher JoWood snatched up the rights to this *Road Rash* knockoff. JoWood hopes *Jacked* has what it takes for the company to burst on to the console scene. Don't be surprised if this one gets canned, though.

Pub.: JoWood **Dev.:** 3DO **Date:** TBA

DRIFT RACER: KAIDO BATTLE

If "kaido" means nothing to you, you've obviously never raced down mountainous, ultracurvy Japanese roads. *Drift Racer* focuses on the *kaido* concept in a game designed to have you powersliding a lot. Unlock more than 150 licensed cars.

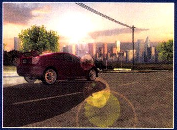
Publisher: Sammy **Developer:** Genki **Release Date:** February



SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE

Though the release of *Jacked* may be in question, Namco has definite plans to release this former 3DO property (reportedly purchased for $1.5 million). Though general buzz around *Street Racing Syndicate* is positive, we're curious to see whether or not it holds a candle to the greatness of *Need for Speed: Underground* and *Midnight Club II*. However, *SRS* does have one interesting (if a bit tasteless) element: You can put a variety of objects on the line with each race—everything from money to pink slips...to your girlfriend. The game includes lots of customization options as well.

Publisher: Namco **Developer:** Eutechnyx **Release Date:** February



CLISH MACLAVER'S GOSSIP GOSSIP

Rumored series originals of '04

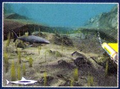
Rumors are swirling about a bunch of yet-to-be-announced games for 2004. For one, it looks extremely likely that Namco will port its bizarre first-person brawler ***Breakdown*** to PS2 at some point. Fight bad guys, drink cola, and throw up in first person.

Capcom looks set to unleash a whole bunch of original games in 2004, although at the moment, everyone's very quiet about it—due to a raft of exclusive arrangements with Nintendo. GameCube titles such as ***Killer 7*** and the gorgeous ***Viewtiful Joe*** will assuredly make the jump to PS2, and I'm sure we'll see them debuted at E3 in May. *Joe* in particular has gotten rave reviews on the Cube, both for its frenetic gameplay and extremely distinctive visual style.

Of all Capcom's games, I'm least excited about Shinji "Resident Evil" Mikami's ***P.N.03***. Frankly, the idea of a sci-fi take on *Devil May Cry* in which you can't run and shoot at the same time doesn't sound like much fun to me. Finally, ***Jiraiya: The Magical Ninja*** is probably Capcom's Japanese PS2 game least likely to cross the Pacific. Designed by the dude who scribbled Maximo, it's an action game about a ninja who's, er, magical.

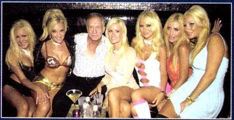
What does sound like fun is that the crew behind *TimeSplitters*, Free Radical, is working on a stealth-action game called ***Second Sight*** for Activision. There aren't many details yet, aside from its existence, but I hear it's much faster-paced than similar games like *Metal Gear*.

Appaloosa's *Ecco the Dolphin* was gorgeous, but arguably boring. The team's next game, ***Sole Predator*** (below), is not about a creature that eats shoes. Dubbed an action/fighting game, it throws a thoroughly freaky spin on the genre by casting you as a great white shark. Yep, you read that right.



One of the best-looking original titles of 2004 is ***Ghosthunter***, from one of the SCEE teams in the U.K. Graphically, it's stunning, and it looks like a much faster-paced action game than one we'd typically expect from the survival-horror genre. Early demos have shown some spectacularly ugly monsters.

On the other end of the ugly spectrum, it seems



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STAR WARS

Ever wonder what makes your PC friends yap on about *Battlefield 1942* all the time? You're about to find out—but not in a World War II setting. *Star Wars: Battlefront* (a working title, but one we expect to stick) takes the idea behind *1942* and moves it to a galaxy far, far away.

So, what does this mean? Think *SOCOM*'s online-multiplayer experience, only with a wide variety of characters to choose from and a bunch of cool *Star Wars* vehicles to operate. You can play in the Galactic Civil War or the Clone Wars, meaning you can choose one of four armies to command (Rebels vs. Imperials or Republic vs. Separatists). You can't mix and match sides (e.g., no Republic vs. Empire), but battles can take place on any planet. It feels weird at first, but you will see droidekas fighting clone troopers on Hoth or Tatooine, while Imperial scouts tussle with Rebel pilots on Naboo.

We're told to expect at least eight planets, most with two huge battle maps. In addition to the previously mentioned worlds of ice and sand, LucasArts has confirmed Geonosis and Yavin IV. It's also hinted at Chewbacca's home world of Kashyyyk and a planet "that might appear in a future *Star Wars* film." Now, what movie could *that* be?

Once you've chosen a side, the next step involves picking a class—such as soldier, heavy soldier, pilot, scout, or a unique unit (Imperials get lieutenants, Rebels gets spies, etc.)—and then jumping into the game. Like in *1942*, each map has a set of control points, and both eight-player sides have a counter that decreases. Your job: Make sure your opponent's reaches zero.

It sounds a little complicated, but trust us, *Battlefront* is incredibly easy to pick up and play. Controls mirror those of any typical shooter, and vehicles control as easily as cars in a *Grand Theft Auto* game.

The vehicle list includes pretty much *every* major ride you've seen in a *Star Wars* flick. Yes, even AT-ATs. Yes, even X-wings. Hell, you can even mount a tauntaun. Better yet, certain vehicles carry multiple troops: One player drives as the others man guns. Most impressive is the Republic gunship, which holds as many as six troops (pilot, rear gunner, and four side gunners). Obviously, cooperation is the key to winning any battle.

Game types include Instant Action (a quick match) and Conquest, where two sides take turns attacking different planets. The winner of each planetary showdown then chooses the next planet to attack, and the winner of the campaign is, well, whoever conquers all the planets. Maintaining a planet for at least a match grants bonuses to the side holding the planet; for example, whoever holds Tatooine might be able to call on Luke or Vader for reinforcements. Another possible bonus is the Death Star attack, where the Empire instantly wins the round (conversely, the Rebels can use Rebel Uprising for the same effect). Conquest mode adds some variety and strategy to traditional "just win this map" matches online.

We've been denied an awesome online *Star Wars* game for a while, but *Battlefront* should change that. It is its destiny.

BATTLEFRONT

WHO'S THIS GUY?
We have no idea
While characters like Luke and Vader do appear in *Battlefront*, you don't play as them. You're just Joe Rebel.

THE GLOW
Tag all the bases
The mighty Empire can crush the Rebellion by securing each of these well-lit beacons found throughout a map. Do it for Lord Vader.

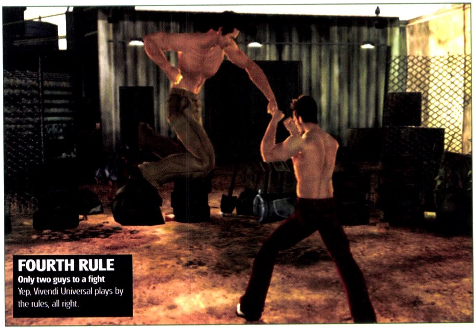
7'2" Height of Richard Kiel. Before *Everything or Nothing,* he played Jaws in *The Spy Who Loved Me* and *Moonraker.*

FIGHT CLUB

Pitting you against Pitt

The fact that this game exists means it probably won't have the nihilistic anticommercialism subtext exhibited in the novel by Chuck Palahniuk. Anyhow, at this point, the only thing we know about *Fight Club* is it's a fighting game with extremely gritty and realistic one-on-one brawls, as they are in the movie. Also, characters and locales are lifted straight from the film, and there's the possibility of some actor involvement. We can say no more. You know the first rule of Fight Club....

Publisher: Vivendi Universal **Developer:** Genuine Games **Release Date:** Fall



FOURTH RULE
Only two guys to a fight
Yep, Vivendi Universal plays by the rules, all right.

BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Bond's gone third-person on us, but he still looks pretty damn slick. He shoots. He rappels. He drives (in some killer sequences developed by EA's *Need for Speed* team). He even kung-fu fights. Other Bond-isms include neat gadgets, such as spiderbombs and cloaking, and the game features likenesses and voices of top-tier talent, including Shannon Elizabeth, Willem Dafoe, Heidi Klum, and Richard "Jaws" Kiel. Our favorite feature? The co-op mode, in which you and another spy run around shooting stuff (and we can't neglect mentioning the secret *Power Stone*-style multiplayer mode!).

Publisher: EA Games **Developer:** EA Redwood Shores **Release Date:** February

THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY

If you beat *The Return of the King*, you might have caught EA's tease of a *Lord of the Rings* game set for late 2004. The action-adventure still has no official name or artwork, but we do know this: It's not just *The Two Towers* and *King* together on one disc—this is a wholly original release. The EA Redwood Shores studio has yet to finalize the gameplay, which we're told "may be very different." Interesting....

Pub.: EA **Dev.:** EA Redwood Shores **Date:** Fall

VAN HELSING

Based on the Hugh Jackman film of the same name, *Van Helsing* puts you in the role of Bram Stoker's famous vampire hunter. You'll fight your way through Castle Dracula, as well as meet up with monsters and minions in Frankenstein's stronghold—and even go toe-to-toe with the Wolfman. Looks like all of classical horror is your playground. It's a neat premise for horror fans, and the movie's sure to be good fun.

Publisher: Vivendi Universal **Developer:** Saffire **Release Date:** Spring

ALIAS

OK, so maybe the *Alias* show's third season is getting kinda weird and stupid on us. Fortunately, Acclaim's game occurs during season two. International high jinks, an authentic script, a story by series creator J.J. Abrams, and a slick splitscreen mode for stealth puzzles make for an intriguing she-spy game. And you really can't go wrong with playing as a spot-on Jennifer Garner.

Pub.: Acclaim **Dev.:** Acclaim **Date:** March

THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

And you thought Jack Skellington would show his face in a game only if it involved some funky-looking versions of Donald and Goofy joined by a kid who uses an oversized key as a sword. Nope! Capcom's game acts as a sequel to Tim Burton's classic dual-holiday film. We've also been told to expect some fun puzzles...but that's pretty much *all* we've heard.

Pub.: Capcom **Dev.:** Capcom **Date:** Oct.

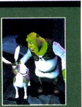
THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE

The *X-Files* TV show may be long gone, but the truth is still out there. *Resist or Serve* takes Scully and Mulder from the Rockies to Siberia in a survival-horror adventure set in the show's seventh season. Expect authentic voice acting for not only Scully and Mulder, but also supporting roles, such as the Smoking Man and the Lone Gunmen.

Pub.: VUG **Dev.:** Black Ops **Date:** Feb.

SHREK 2

Yep, *Shrek 2* is coming out. And Activision is releasing a game based on it—one you probably won't play. We will, though. We have to.



A SOUND OF THUNDER

Based on the movie that itself is based on a Ray Bradbury short story, BAM's *A Sound of Thunder* features dinosaurs in modern-day metropolises. All because some time traveler killed a mosquito during a visit to the past.

THE POLAR EXPRESS

Chris Van Allsburg's award-winning children's book about Santa showing a kid around the North Pole is a movie come Christmas 2004. THQ is adapting it to game form.

THE WARRIORS

Who better than Rockstar to game-ify a cult classic about dueling street gangs? We have a feeling its audience will differ a bit from that of *The Polar Express*.

THE THRILL OF SINGING
MEETS THE AGONY OF DEFEAT.

Karaoke Revolution™

When it comes to singing, you may already be a winner. Find out with the first karaoke video game that actually judges your vocal talents. Karaoke Revolution™ turns you into a star and your PlayStation®2 into an interactive karaoke machine, complete with scoring, training and a built-in audience.

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PlayStation®2

HARMONIX

KONAMI

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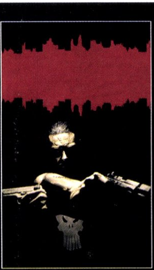
$4,000 According to *Wizard,* the value of *The Amazing Spider-Man* #3 (July 1963), which features the first appearance of Doctor Octopus.

THE PUNISHER

Not much is known about THQ's *Punisher* game. Don't expect anything based on the summer blockbuster from Artisan Pictures, though. This game is based squarely on the comic book—so much so that Volition got writer Garth Ennis to pen a special script just for the title. Whether the story line is "funny Punisher" (in which, among other things, he kills an assassin by rolling an obese man onto his victim) or "gritty Punisher" (who might outgrit Max Payne) remains to be seen.

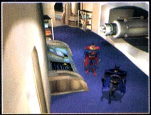
Pub.: THQ **Dev.:** Volition **Date:** Fall

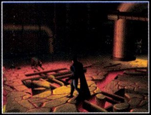


JUSTICE LEAGUE: DIVIDED WE FALL

Lately, Batman and Superman haven't had the greatest track records when it comes to games. Let's hope that having them team up (along with Wonder Woman, Hawkgirl, Green Lantern, the Flash, and Martian Manhunter) will end their streak of crappiness. The specifics of *Divided* are vague, but you somehow manage two Leaguers at once as they fight the forces of evil. Only Darkseid and other baddies from Apokolips have been confirmed, but we'll be sorely disappointed if Lex Luthor, Joker, and the rest of the Injustice League don't make an appearance as well.

Publisher: Midway **Developer:** Midway **Release Date:** September



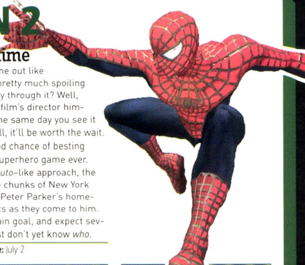


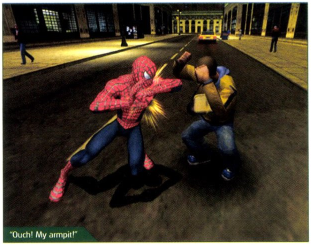
SPIDER-MAN 2

It's no movie spoiler this time

Remember how the last *Spider-Man* game came out like two weeks before the movie it was based on, pretty much spoiling the ending for anyone who couldn't wait to play through it? Well, that's not happening this year. By order of the film's director himself, Sam Raimi, *Spider-Man 2* will hit stores the same day you see it at your local googleplex. From what we can tell, it'll be worth the wait. It appears that *Spider-Man 2* stands a very good chance of besting Neversoft's own PS1 *Spider-Man* as the best superhero game ever. Taking a much more wide-open, *Grand Theft Auto*–like approach, the game gives the webslinger full access to huge chunks of New York City (or at least a very close representation of Peter Parker's hometown), allowing him to take on superheroic acts as they come to him. Of course, thwarting Doctor Octopus is the main goal, and expect several other supervillains along the way—we just don't yet know *who.*

Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Treyarch **Release Date:** July 2



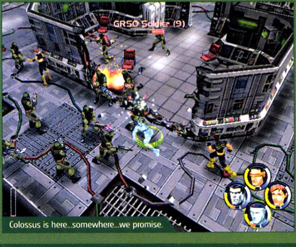


"Ouch! My armpit!"

X-MEN: LEGENDS

Inspired by such titles as *Diablo* and *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance, X-Men: Legends* places Marvel's merry mutants into an action-RPG that already appears to be the superteam's greatest videogame adventure. Whether you control them all yourself on the fly or three friends join your cause, *Legends* emphasizes teamwork—four X-Men (out of at least 15 altogether) always work in tandem to take on Morlocks, the Brotherhood, and other foes. You can even execute special moves, like the patented Wolvie/Colossus Cannonball Special.

Pub.: Activision **Dev.:** Raven **Date:** Spring

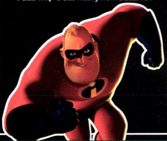


Colossus is here...somewhere...we promise.

THE INCREDIBLES

THQ is very excited to have the license to make games based on Pixar's winter 2004 3D-animated film, *The Incredibles.* After all, superheroics are considerably more gameplay-friendly than, well, poppa fish trying to find baby fish. Play as four Incredibles, each with a different set of powers.

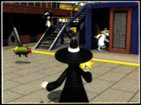
Pub.: THQ **Dev.:** Heavy Iron **Date:** Fall



SPY VS. SPY

You've seen these sneaky pranksters go at it in the pages of *MAD*; now, don your own fedora and go up against as many as three friends (the game adds Gray and a Mech Spies to White and Black). Leave traps for opponents or go on the offensive with an arsenal of weapons and gadgets.

P: TDK **D:** Way Forward **Date:** Spring



LOBO

Kemco still has yet to release any screens of this third-person action shooter starring the Main Man, so we still don't know if it's worth giving a frag about. Then again, it *is* a superhero game from Kemco....

DAREDEVIL

There's still some question as to whether or not Encore will actually unleash the Man Without Fear on PS2 this spring, but we think it'll happen. The entire game is comic-inspired, so don't even ask about Affleck.

FANTASTIC FOUR

We're still not sure exactly *what* Activision's game—based on Marvel's original superteam—is all about, but we're confident it'll be the best one ever to star the Fantastic Four. (Granted, that's not saying very much, but hey....)

GOBLIN COMMANDER

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"Goblin Commander is bursting with great ideas that are implemented with brains..." GAMEPRO

"Leave it to Ron and Chris Millar for designing a console RTS control scheme that not only works, but works well." GAMESPY.COM

"4.5of 5." GAMEPRO EDITOR'S CHOICE

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XBOX

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TEEN

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
Violence

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TRANSFORMERS ARMADA
PRELUDE TO ENERGON
Transform and roll out

There may be no *Transformers: Generation 1* game on deck for American audiences, but *Armada* looks like a fine substitute. Each of the three playable Autobots (Optimus Prime, Red Alert, and Hotshot) has his own advantages, and transforming plays a big role. Also, the Mini-Cons (Cybertronian for "Pokémon") add different skills and abilities, such as stealth, slowing down time, and shooting alongside you. All this game needs is to have Prime break out some crazy Metallikato moves during combat.

Publisher: Atari **Developer:** Melbourne House **Release Date:** May

"One shall stand. One shall fall."

WHAT'S THAT MEAN?
Metallikato is the official martial art of Cybertron, home of the Transformers. We're dead serious.

DEXTER'S LAB: EXTREME ROBOT RUMBLE

The last *Dexter* we reviewed was a surprisingly pleasant diversion for both kids and adults. Add in snazzy cel-shaded graphics and some satisfying robot-bashing action, and it's sure to be a treat for fans.

Pub.: BAM **Dev.:** n-Space **Date:** Spring

GREGORY HORROR SHOW

You're a blockheaded boy trapped in a haunted house run by a blockheaded mouse named Gregory. (We don't get the concept, either.) Explore Gregory's crazy haunted house and try to collect souls from all the weird and ooky spirits.

Pub.: Capcom **Dev.:** Capcom **Date:** Spring

【グレゴリー】
これはこれは　お客さま
何か御用でございま…ハッ！？

ROBOTECH: INVASION

The development team at Vicious Cycle has opted for a slightly more realistic look and a new first-person-shooter gameplay structure for the latest *Robotech*. But the changes don't stop there. *Invasion* places you in the midst of the New Generation portion of *Robotech*, in which the humans are struggling in their war against the Invid. You have access to the superawesome motorcycle that transforms into armor capable of protecting the humans during battle. *Invasion*'s online modes support up to 16 players at once!

Publisher: TDK **Developer:** Vicious Cycle **Release Date:** Fall

CY GIRLS

BBI's sexy action figures come to life in *Cy Girls*, which lets you play as two female cyberterrorists. Ice specializes in weaponry, relying on pistols and other guns to do most of her dirty work. Conversely, Aska's ninja skills allow her to sneak up close to an enemy, blades drawn for the kill.

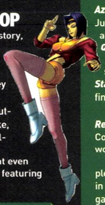
Pub.: Konami **Dev.:** Konami **Date:** Early '04

MCFARLANE'S EVIL PROPHECY

Take a dash of *Dynasty Warriors*, throw in some boss enemies based on Todd McFarlane's Monsters toy line (Dracula, the Mummy, Werewolf, Frankenstein, Sea Creature, and Voodoo Queen), and you've got the gist of the four-player *Evil Prophecy*.

Pub.: Konami **Dev.:** Konami **Date:** Spring

COWBOY BEBOP



Based on an original story, Bandai's first *Cowboy Bebop* game follows Spike and his fellow bounty hunters as they amble through space, chasing all kinds of outlaws. You play as Spike, Jet, or Faye in this cel-shaded game—and if you're good, you might even unlock a bonus mode featuring Ein!

CLISH MACLAVER'S GOSSIP GOSSIP
Rumored licensed games of 2004

2004 is a big year for licensed games. Believe it or not, Activision will release a game based on Christmas 2004's ***Lemony Snicket*** movie. We can also expect ***Astro Boy*** from a yet-to-be-announced publisher, plus ***G.I. Joe*** from Atari.

More interestingly, I hear EA and Def Jam will team up in 2004 for a new project, with the possibility of even more announcements about some very different projects between the two powerhouses. Yes, they're probably thinking about a *Vendetta* sequel, but it's the rumor of broader projects that Def Jam insiders describe as "something more like *GTA*" that have piqued my interest.

On the "Oh really? Didn't see that coming" list of the spectacularly predictable, I've heard that work has already started on a new ***WWE SmackDown!*** game. Similarly, Eidos execs are so excited by their extreme cleverness for signing the ***Backyard Wrestling*** deal that they're already piecing together the necessary nonsense for a sequel. Probably full of blood and boobies. Hopefully not in the same scene.

The ***Olympics*** take place in Athens in 2004, so expect the predictable slew of sports games based on the event, none of which will advance the genre any more than Epyx's *Summer Games* on Commodore 64 back in 1984.

Despite lukewarm reception from the last two movies, I'm hearing that the folks at Shiny and Atari are thinking about knocking out another ***Matrix*** game next year.

Davison has been bugging me to find out if another ***SpongeBob*** game is in the works. There is.

Also not surprising is the fact that EA will plop out ***Harry Potter*** games at an increased rate. ***The Prisoner of Azkaban*** will be in theaters in June—expect a game around then, as well as another Harry ***Quidditch***-like title by the holidays.

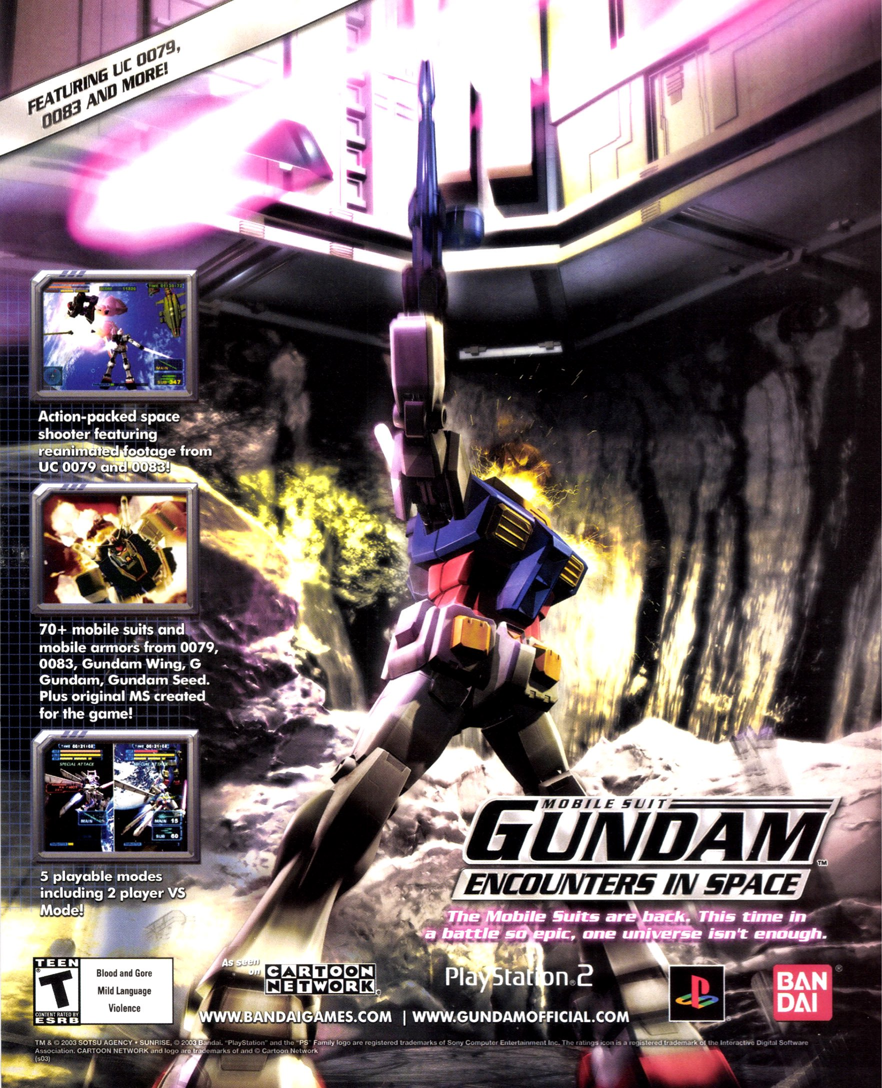
Want an actual surprise? For some reason, there's going to be a ***Starsky & Hutch 2***. Presumably everyone at Empire has their fingers crossed about the movie sparking some sales.

Another surprise, potentially good this time, is that a ***Reservoir Dogs*** game is in development. Late? Sure it is. Cool? It better be. (Yet, for some reason, Vivendi Universal won't be putting its *Kill Bill* license to use.)

In what no doubt started as a meeting of marketing people at Universal who heard that Snake calls himself Plissken in *Metal Gear Solid 2*, there will be an ***Escape From New York*** game in 2004, starring the original Snake Plissken. No word yet on whether Kurt Russell is doing the voice.

What else is likely? Another ***Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*** game, for one—we hope they go easy on the chatting for the sequel. Watch out for something ***Batman*** related, a game based on the third ***Blade*** movie (***Trinity***), and yet more from the ***Dragon Ball Z*** camp.

Finally, it's not confirmed yet, but I've heard EA will put out a follow-up to the N64 classic ***GoldenEye***. It may be just a rumor, but those who speak of it do so with real conviction. Let's hope it lives up to the original.



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5 playable modes including 2 player VS Mode!

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ENCOUNTERS IN SPACE

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TEEN
T
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Blood and Gore
Mild Language
Violence

As seen on CARTOON NETWORK

PlayStation®2

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(s03)

TOM CLANCY'S
SPLINTER

Sam Fisher has learned a lot. He still doesn't know what the heck "Pandora Tomorrow" means (then again, neither do we), but Ubisoft Shanghai promises this sequel will fix every shortcoming its PS2 *Splinter Cell* port had. *Pandora Tomorrow* is a larger game, both literally and figuratively.

The game kicks off with Sam doing his stealth thing in an Indonesian jungle—a far cry from the more linear, dark urban interiors of the previous game. Of course, new gadgets, such as a camouflage suit and an expanded optical cable (you can now look above and below, not just at the next room over), help our hero get through these tougher, bigger, and more open-ended missions.

Later on, a level aboard a moving train further exhibits the game's open-ended traits. Sam can literally go through, on top of, below, or on the side of said locomotive.

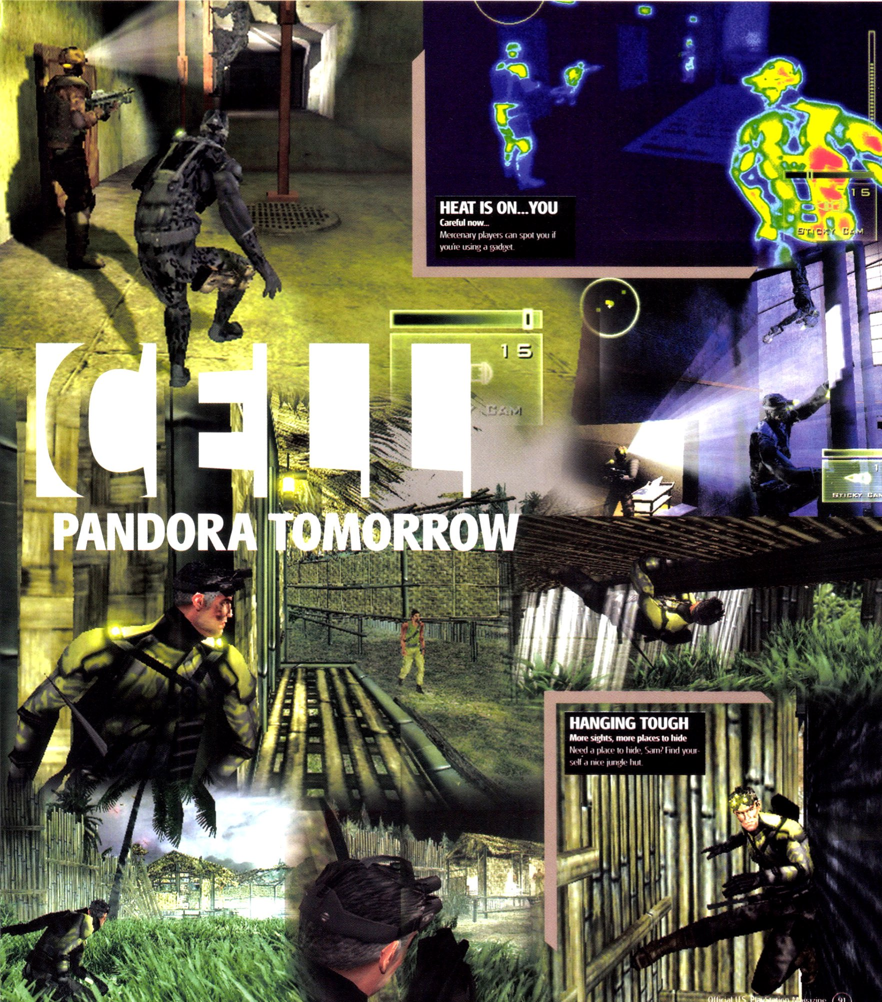
The team has also added some subtle improvements to the series' interface. For instance, every time Sam gets near a booby trap (but doesn't quite trigger it), your controller shakes, giving you a tactile warning about the area.

Also, while you probably don't remember the last game's fairly blasé story, this installment promises a more riveting plot—one involving private armies, Indonesian guerrillas, and a CIA agent who might have "gone native" (spy slang for an undercover operative who has defected to the side he has infiltrated).

When Ubisoft announced a unique multiplayer experience for *Pandora*, people reasonably speculated some sort of cooperative spy high jinks. Well, there is some truth to such theories: Multiple spies (all working for Shadow Net, an extension of Fisher's own Third Echelon agency) work together to fulfill an objective. However, as was recently unveiled, a mercenary side also exists for the multiplayer missions. While spies attempt to infiltrate and steal or destroy things, the game tasks mercenaries with seeking out those agents or protecting the merchandise.

The mercenary experience pretty much serves as the exact opposite of spy gameplay. While spies play in a third-person view, are slow and stealthy, and use lots of gadgets and few weapons, mercenaries play in a fast-paced first-person-shooter mode and have a huge arsenal. Mercenaries can also flush out spies with certain gadgets, such as motion trackers and electromagnetic-frequency detectors that allow you to see where spy devices are being used. In other words, multiplayer has a lot to offer both run-n-gunners and sneak-n-stalkers. It's only one of the improvements that makes *Pandora* one of 2004's most anticipated sequels.

CELL
PANDORA TOMORROW


15
STICKY CAM
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STICKY CAM

HEAT IS ON...YOU

Careful now...

Mercenary players can spot you if you're using a gadget.

HANGING TOUGH

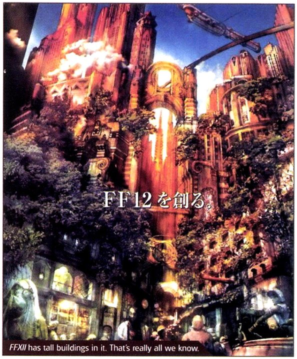
More sights, more places to hide

Need a place to hide, Sam? Find yourself a nice jungle hut.

1995 Year of release of the original *Front Mission* in Japan for Super Famicom (Japanese equivalent to Super NES).

FINAL FANTASY XII

A departure from the norm



FFXII has tall buildings in it. That's really all we know.

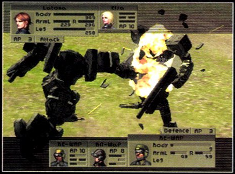
If you thought *FFX-2* was a dramatic reimagining of this never-ending franchise, then *FFXII* will addle your cerebellum. With Yasumi Matsuno at the helm (*Vagrant Story*, *Final Fantasy Tactics*), *FFXII* looks to be something remarkably different from the past few releases in the series. Information at press time was scant, but by the time you read this, an event in Japan should have shed some more light on the title. Be sure to tune in to www.1up.com for the latest news.

Publisher: Square Enix **Developer:** Square Enix **Release Date:** Late '04 (or later)

FRONT MISSION 4

Looking remarkably like a high-res version of *Front Mission 3*, *FM4* continues the intense turn-based battles between brutish, hulking mecha. In typical strategy-RPG fashion, action unfolds on giant grid-based fields—although this time, more than two Wanzers can engage at once, opening up a new range of combat possibilities.

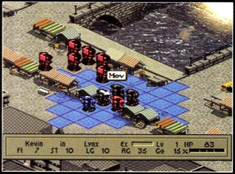
Publisher: Square Enix **Developer:** Square Enix **Date:** TBA



FRONT MISSION 1ST

Front-runner for best PS1 game of 2004? *Front Mission 1st*. Hey, we're not going out on a limb here—it's the only significant PS1 release we know of. A port of the first Super Famicom *Front Mission*, *FM1st* takes you back to the Second Huffman Conflict of the late 21st century. You know, when Wanzers were Wanzers, and all that other good stuff.

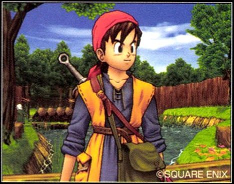
Publisher: Square Enix **Developer:** Square Enix **Date:** TBA



DRAGON WARRIOR VIII

Developer Level-5 has chops. No one can argue that. Although the first *Dark Cloud* met with mixed reviews (we loved it, others were nonplussed), *Dark Cloud 2* was universally embraced as a stunning mix of charming graphics and engaging gameplay. Now, Level-5 has taken the helm of the latest *Dragon Warrior*, and we couldn't be more pleased. Screenshots reveal a game that (finally!) looks as good as it should. *Dragon Warrior* has always been immensely popular in Japan, but *DW8* might finally push the series out of the shadow of *Final Fantasy* for U.S. gamers.

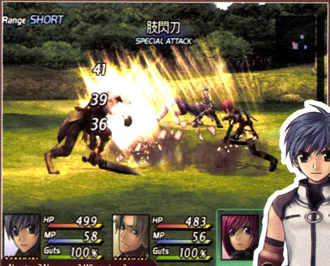
Pub.: Square Enix **Dev.:** Level-5 **Date:** Late '04 (or later)



STAR OCEAN: TILL THE END OF TIME

We've been waiting forever, but this one's finally arriving this spring. An action-RPG with a real-time battle system, *End of Time* has so many customizable options that you're sure to be playing till...well, you know. Starring the aptly named Fate Linegod and his childhood friend Sophia Esteed, this latest *Star Ocean* has the richest sci-fi feel of the series, plus some plot twists epic in scope.

Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Tri-Ace **Date:** February



No stars? No ocean? What gives?

XENOSAGA: EPISODE II

Subtitled *Jenseits von Gut und Bose*, the second of this six-part franchise picks up where the first left off, but with a cast of modestly redesigned characters that look even better than before. Not much is known about the battle system (is it new? the same? tweaked?), but we hear Shion and KOS-MOS will step aside to allow other characters—Jr., M.O.M.O., even Shion's brother Jin—to share more of their story.

Publisher: Namco **Developer:** Monolith Soft **Date:** TBA (likely fall)

GROWLANSER GENERATIONS

Encompassing *Growlanser II* and *Growlanser III*, *Generations* brings us two full-fledged strategy-RPGs with rich traditions among Japanese gamers, courtesy of Working Designs. Though the game may look dated, there's more to these strategic battles than you typically find.

SUIKODEN IV

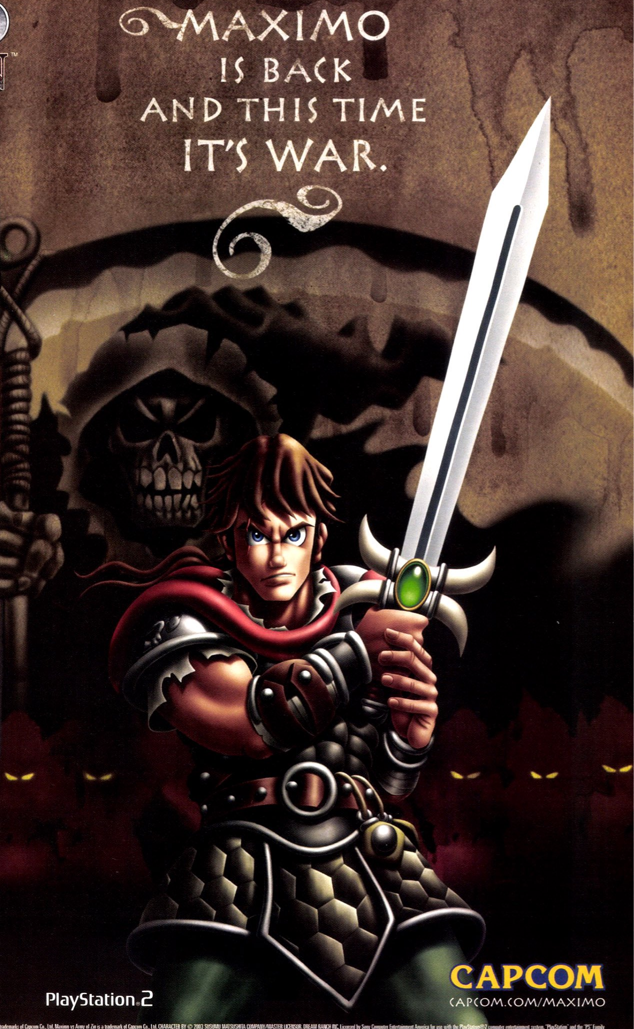
Set prior to the original game, *Suikoden IV* once again features 108 stars of destiny that you can recruit to your cause. The game also includes a new battle system, along with some sea-based ship combat.

MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN™

Arsenal of devastating combos and attacks.

Army of Zin declare war on the living.

Unleash the terrifying power of Grim.



AVAILABLE JANUARY 2004

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Blood
Violence

PlayStation®2

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DID YOU KNOW?
Real-life samurai Jubei Yagyu appears in both Capcom's *Onimusha 2* and SNK's *Samurai Shodown* games.

GRAN TURISMO 4

500 cars, 100 tracks

Every time we hear *GT4* has been delayed, it's probably because creator Kazunori Yamauchi has convinced Sony's Ken Kutaragi he needs to push things just a li'l further. You can imagine the conversation....

KUTARAGI: Yo! When's your damn game coming out, fool?

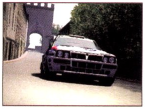
YAMAUCHI: 'Sup, beeyatch. I've just worked out how to totally simulate every single working part of every car ever made, and I want to incorporate it into the game.

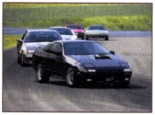
KUTARAGI: Another two months for that shizzle?

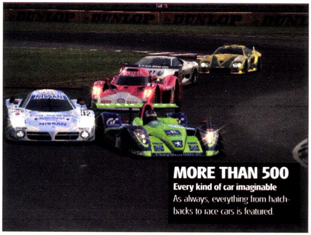
YAMAUCHI: You bet your dizzle.

All Japanese geniuses talk like Snoop Dogg. Last we heard, Polyphony guys were traveling the globe in search of real examples of specific cars rather than just generic models.

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** Polyphony Digital **Release Date:** Summer





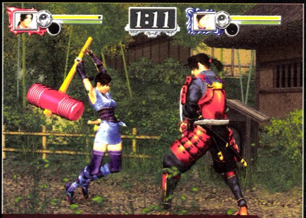


MORE THAN 500
Every kind of car imaginable
As always, everything from hatchbacks to race cars is featured.

ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS

One of the two upcoming games in the *Onimusha* series actually has more in common with Dreamcast's *Power Stone* than the series it's based on. Up to four characters from both *Onimusha: Warlords* and *Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny* fight on various multitiered environments where they use not only their default weapons, but also crazy, seemingly out-of-place secondary items, such as rifles and enormous mallets. The game integrates soul capturing as a means of replenishing energy and magic.

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** March



Kaede demonstrates the game's classic medieval Japanese weaponry.

THE KING OF FIGHTERS 2003 & 3D

SNK remains tight-lipped about its next two fighting games, both the new *King of Fighters* and the 3D *KOF* that's in development. However, the company has revealed that the first team in *KOF 2003* consists of Terry Bogard, Joe Higashi, and Griffon Mask and that these characters are designed after their *Garou: Mark of the Wolves* counterparts.

Publisher: SNK
Developer: SNK
Date: TBA

HYPER STREET FIGHTER II: THE ANNIVERSARY EDITION

To mark the 15th anniversary of *Street Fighter II* (yes, it's been that long!), Capcom has combined every version of the game into one single release. So, now Ryu from the original *Street Fighter II* can take on Ken from *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*. Exciting!

Pub.: Capcom **Dev.:** Capcom **Date:** TBA

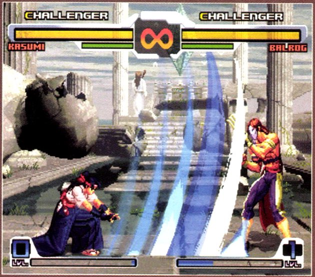
Chun-Li
KO
29
Chun-Li

SNK VS. CAPCOM: SVC CHAOS

Capcom had a shot at it (twice!), and now it's SNK's turn. *Chaos* utilizes the traditional SNK fighter control setup and features familiar characters from *Capcom vs. SNK*. But there are a number of new faces as well, such as Hugo from *Street Fighter III* and Earthquake from *Samurai Shodown*.

Pub.: SNK **Dev.:** SNK **Date:** Spring

CHALLENGER
52
CHALLENGER



MX UNLEASHED

THQ has always released the best motocross games, so hopes are high for *MX Unleashed*. Having Rainbow Studios (*ATV Offroad Fury*, *Splashdown*) develop certainly doesn't hurt.

KARAOKE REVOLUTION EXPANSION DISCS

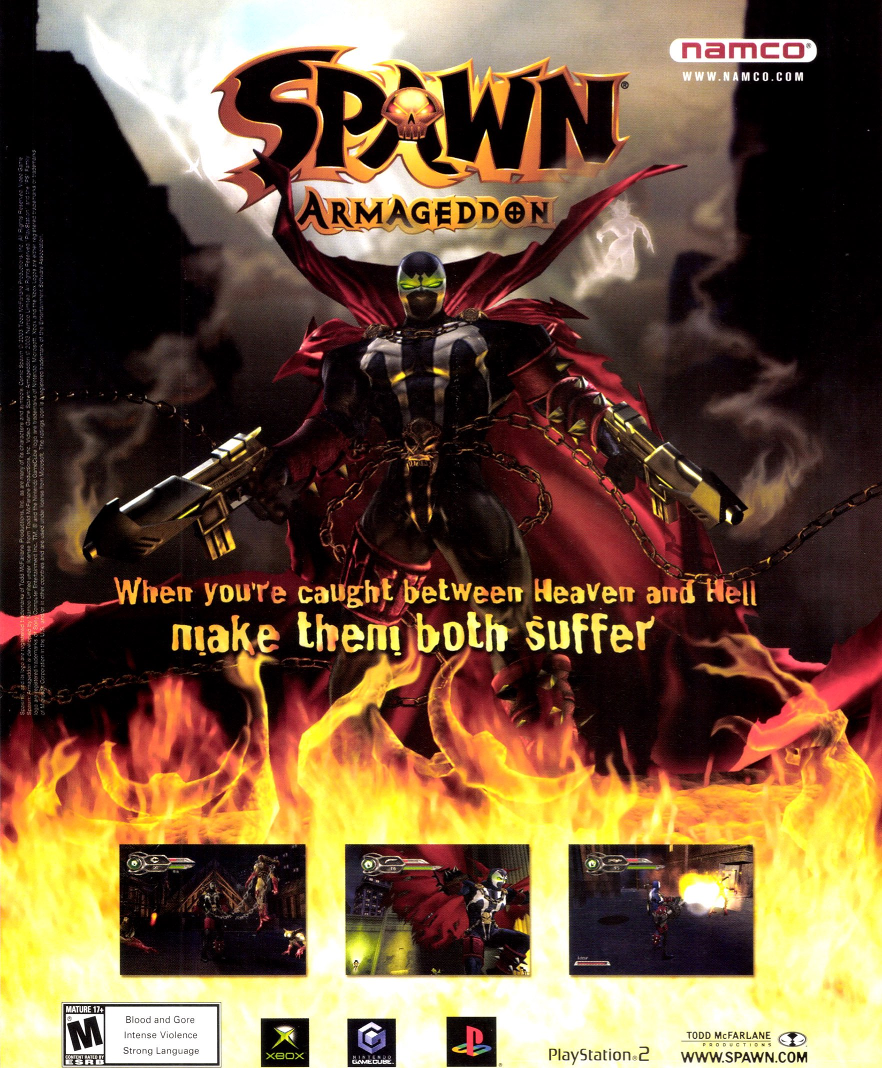
We're still not sure exactly what to expect (or when), but Konami will release at least a couple of expansion discs for its sing-along game in 2004.

WORLD SOCCER: WINNING ELEVEN 7

You know, we've gotta say we're a little disappointed in *Winning Eleven 7*, which arrives in February. It'll be great, sure...but it won't be online. Bummer.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING: SHOWDOWN

The third game in the *Legends of Wrestling* series has a new grappling system, as well as more than 70 wrestlers, including the Ultimate Warrior.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Intense Violence
Strong Language

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